INSTRUCTIONS FOR Hiſtory:

WITH

A Character of the moſt *Conſiderable Hiſtorians*, Ancient and Modern.

Out of the French,

By J. DAVIES *of* Kidwelly.

LONDON,
Printed by *A. G.* and *J. P.* dwelling near the Grate in *Little Britain*.
M. DC. LXXX.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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M DC LXXX

TO THE

Worthily Honoured,

Sir *GEORGE WHARTON,*

Baronet.

IT is the unavoidable Destiny of some to be highly oblig'd by those, to whom their good Fortune has made them any thing particularly known. Not that those Favours are to be attributed to ought of more than ordinary Merit on their side, by whom they were received; but purely to that Munificence and Transcendency of Generosity, which

is so predominant in certain persons, that they cannot forbear endeavouring to render the Conditions of those, whom they once take notice of, more comfortable then they found them.

That these have been my very Circumstances, I have had occasion heretofore to acknowledge to others; and I am now to make the same Acknowledgment to your self, from whom, in my most pressing Exigencies, I have receiv'd such seasonable Reliefs, as give me just cause to celebrate the Liberalities of so great a Benefactor.

As to the small Piece which this humble Address ushers to

your

your hands, I find it without any Author's Name prefix'd thereto. Of which Concealment of himself, as also of his Design in the ensuing *INSTRUCTIONS*, since he has given an Account in a particular Preface, I thought fit to give the *English* Reader the satisfaction of that too, that they who shall henceforth concern themselves in the publishing of any thing by way of *History*, may take their Measures from this little Treatise, and before they go any further, compute the Sacredness and Extent of their Undertaking.

I have onely to add the retributory Devotions of such as are highly sensible how highly they

are oblig'd, and to pray for the Continuation of a Life and Health, which has been so beneficial to several Persons, and particularly to,

Honoured Sir,

Your most Humble, and much obliged Servant,

J. DAVIES.

THE Original Author TO THE READER.

I Am not so well conceited of my self, or my work, as to set my Name before it. For, besides that it is not a throughly-shap'd Project of the manner how History should be written, and that the very Project it self is the result of such a reading of Historians, as may be thought superficial enough, the natural distrust I have of my self, puts me into a fear, that either Impatience or Precipitation has wrested out of my hands what could not have continued there much longer.

But not to create a disgust in the Publick, for the present I here make it, by undervaluing it so far, I shall think it no

trouble

trouble to acknowledge, That this Work is a kind of Abridgment of what has been written upon this subject, by the greatest men of the first and last Ages; That it is an Extract of what passed (that was most rational) in the Apprehensions of Dionysius Halicarnassæus, *in his Answer to* Pompey, *requiring his Sentiment upon the* Greek *Historians, and his criticizing Judgment upon their different Characters; That it is a Copy of* Lucian's *most judicious Reflections, in that admirable Treatise which he writ, of the manner how History ought to be written; and that in short, the Sentiments which I advance in this Discourse, are not so much my own, as those of* Francesco Patrici, *in his* Dialogues, *those of* Girolamo Marucci, Agostino Mascardi, Paolo Beni, Luis Cabrera, *and the other modern* Spanish *and* Italian *Authors, who have treated of this matter.*

But as it is possible that I may have injur'd their Conceptions, by intermixing my own therewith, I am to declare, That I do not think my Reputation concern'd in

per-

perſuade my Readers that it may be other-wiſe. They are not Laws which I impoſe, as having not either Authority or Juriſdiction to do any ſuch thing; but they are at moſt but ſimple Advertiſements, which every one may take as he pleaſes; ſo far would I be thought from giving Inſtructions to any one, by a title which will argue ſomewhat of Vanity to thoſe who are Lovers of Modeſty, that I would have the World aſſur'd of my readineſs to receive Directions from all others. For if I have not wit enough to be as exact as ſo important a Deſign requires I ſhould be, I have judgment enough to be timorous and diſtruſtful of my ſelf.

I am further to avoid the Imputation of aſſuming to my ſelf the honour of a counterfeit Modeſty in ſuppreſſing my Name, to acknowledge that my concealing my ſelf proceeds ſomewhat from Vanity; for I am too coy to make a diſcovery of my ſelf, knowing as I do, that in an Age ſo apprehenſive and critical as ours is, a man muſt think it matter of Humiliation to declare himſelf an Author. Nay the rigour is ſo great,

great, that there is not any Merit, how-e're so well it may be established, that will exempt any one from it; and it now seems to be a kind of presumption, for a man to commit himself openly to the Judgment of the Publick, which grows daily more and more delicate and humorous, and that in a Juncture of time when Censure favours no man.

It is certain also, that there is so much wisdom, for a man not to pretend to any great talent of Capacity, and that there is so much judicious caution in being modest, that I should in those passages wherein I advance any thing of my own, have mollified my Expression with Aristotle's (Peradventure) *or* Cicero's (It seems) *so to be the less positive, and to give my Sentiment with more reservedness, if that had been suitable to the Simplicity in which I use to express my self. For as soon as a man has acquir'd a mean degree of wisdom, he is very cautious of being peremptory and decisive, in an Age so obstinate and opiniatrous as ours is. And therefore ill luck betide him who decides.*

Be

Be it noted further, that this Discourse which I make upon History, is not at all of the Character of that of Lucian, *who commends those that write well for no other reason, than that he may blame and censure those who write ill; and under the Approbation he gives good Authors, conceals a smart Satyr against the bad ones. That is not my humour, as having no pique against any one. I pretend onely to open their eyes, who have their Sences attentive, to make them comprehend how that a man ought to tremble, when he concerns himself in the writing of History, wherein it is so hard a matter to come off well; and that the particular Judgment which* Dionysius Halicarnassæus *passes upon* Thucydides, *should startle all wise Historians.*

In fine, to close up all with a word of the Character of the Work, after I had spoken of the Workman: I declare, that Sencefulness, with an exact observance of Simplicity, is more conspicuous in these Instructions, than any political Subtilty; which is the thing that the more inquisitive

true sort of people do most look for in History, in regard that Politicks is the vainest of all the Sciences; and that senceful Reflections are the most universal and most solid Groundwork of the other. I do not pretend to offer all that might be said upon this matter; and possibly I may some time or other say more of it, if the Publick give a kind Entertainment to the present Labour.

The

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In-

Instructions FOR HISTORY.

The Design of the Work.

THE Gust of the present Age seems at length to make some progress towards its Perfection: And it seems also, that in all things we proceed in some measure according to the Dictates of sound Sence, that we esteem what is real and solid, and that we are not able

P. B. 42.

able any longer to endure what is either false or frivolous. This is the Sentiment of all rational persons, which is the more substantial part of those who are concern'd in Judging, though possibly it be the least. But there is not any thing makes a greater discovery of this Discernment, than the Disgust men have for *Romances*, and whatever has any tendency thereto. Insomuch that as this Love of Truth and sound Sence is a disposition to the Love of *History*; so let us accordingly make our advantage of so favourable a Conjuncture to serve the publick, answerably to its own inclination; let us exercise our selves in what can make us accomplish'd in that Art; let us apprehend the Excellency of it, and let us instruct our selves in what is requisite for our making a succesful advancement therein. For what *Genius* is there not requisite for that purpose? And what can be imagined more excellent than History, which knows how to do justice to Virtue, by the Eternization of Vertuous Actions? And this in my Judgment is that which may contribute, to the perfection whereof that kind of Writing is capable, which now seems to assume a Supremacy over all the others, if this Love of sound Sence, which aims at its own Establishment, may endure, in opposition to the different Gusts, which a Fantastic Humour or Vanity en-

Pulchrum imprimis videtur, non pati occidere, quibus æternitas debeatur. Plin. l. 5. epist.

endeavours to introduce from time to time, by counterfeit *Idea's* of Ingenuity.

I.

How Hiſtory ought to be written.

THere is not any thing more difficult, than for a man preciſely to Affirm, which is the beſt way of writing Hiſtory. Every one ought to follow that which he finds moſt in uſe in the Age wherein he writes, and moſt conformable to the Guſt and Inclinations of the People to whom he writes. But is that enough to pleaſe Poſterity? That is an humorous, ſevere, and incorruptible Judge, who gives its approbation onely to true Merit. Let us therefore endeavour to find out the ways, whereby we may deſerve its Suffrage. When a men writes nobly, with a conſtant Current of ſound Sence, Purity, and Simplicity of expreſſion, he always pleaſes, what Language ſoever he writes in. Theſe are univerſal Principles, which are ſuitable to the Humours of all Nations: for there are no other general Rules in the world, than thoſe of Reaſon and ſound Sence. 'Tis by theſe

that *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, *Saluſt*, *Cæſar*, *Titus Livius*, *Buchanan*, *Mariana*, and ſuch others have always pleas'd, though they writ in Times, and amongſt Nations of ſo different a *Genius*; inſomuch that a man may be aſſured of pleaſing when he writes as they have done. For what Grandeur, what Judgment, what Politeneſs, but above all what a ſincere Simplicity is there not obſervable in the works of thoſe great men!

II.

What it is to write Nobly.

A Man muſt therefore beſet himſelf to write nobly, when he makes it his buſineſs to write Hiſtory. For when a man fancies himſelf ſpeaking to all the World, and to all Ages, he aſſumes a Character which gives him Authority to lift up his Voice, be-

—*genus hoc ſcribendi incitatum atque elatum eſſe debere, quis ignorat?* Cic. ad fam. epiſt. 7. l. 6.

Addidit Hiſtoriæ majorem ſonum vocis Antipater, *cæteri non exornatores rerum, ſed tantummodo narratores fuerunt.* Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

cauſe

cauſe he ſpeaks to Kings, Princes, and the Grandees of all Countries and all Ages, and is become in ſome manner the Maſter and Inſtructor of all Mankind. There is not any thing therefore more eſſential to Hiſtory, than for a man to give his Diſcourſe a noble and lofty ſtrain, to ſpeak as he ought to do. So that the Hiſtorian quits the mean and familiar Language, that by the Excellency of Expreſſion he may anſwer the Excellency of the things which he has to ſay. He accuſtoms himſelf to make noble Reflections on whatever comes into his mind, that by the choice of Words he may make it his deſign to give weight to his Thoughts, and vigour to his Diſcourſe, by a careful queſt after whatever may heighten and ennoble it, in order to the beſtowing a Character of Grandeur on all he ſays. The Models in this kind of writing are *Thucydides* amongſt the Greeks, and *Livy* amongſt the Latines. They are the onely Authors, who have been able to keep up that lofty Style, with the ſame ſpirit and the ſame tone, without falling into the mean and vulgar way of Expreſſion; upon which account they have had but few Imitators. *Herodotus*, out of an humour to keep too cloſe to *Homer*, would needs ſometimes dwindle in thoſe paſſages which required Elevation, as *Longinus* has obſerv'd. *Tacitus*, who ma-

ny times is great onely upon the score of his being concise, is not a very good Model to be propos'd to any; for the Grandeur of his Style has not any thing that's natural. And in the general it is requisite, that we distinguish between the counterfeit Grandeur and the real. It is not in the affectation of far-fetch'd Terms, nor in lofty Expressions; 'tis not in an overflux of big words, nor yet in the sumptuousness of discourse, that we are to make that Excellency of Style to consist, which History requires: wherein *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, and most of the Historians of the lower Class, were deceived. It consists in a lofty Expression, but modest, and in a Discourse capable of keeping up the highest matters, and raising up the weakest. It consists, in fine, in that temperament of Grandeur, which *Quintilian* gives true Eloquence. It is not sufficient for a man to be ingenious, but he must have a particular Genius, to write after that manner, and to give a cer ain Elevation to what he says, by the Choice of the Terms, and by the Grandeur of the Sentiments. That Talent is so rare, that if we dash out of the number of Historians those who have not written thus, the List of the true ones will be very small.

Magna, non nimia; sublimis, non abrupta; fortis, non temeraria; severa, non tristis; gravis, non tarda; læta, non luxuriosa; plena, non tumida. Fabl. 12. c. 10.

III.

What it is to write with a constant Contexture of sound Sence.

TO write with that Contexture of sound Sence, is to go directly to the main end, in what matter soever a man writes, without wandering or amusing himself by the way. It consists further in an Exposal of things with a kind of Prudence and Reservedness, without abandoning himself either to the heat of his Imagination, or the vivacity of his Wit. It consists in the suppressing of what may be superfluous in the Expression, such as are those Adverbs and Epithetes, which extenuate things in aggravating them; in not leaving any thing that is insignificant, languishing, or fruitless; in a generous Retrenchment of what ought not to be said, how plausible soever it may be; in attributing always less to what is splendid than to what is solid; in not discovering any thing of fire or heat, where he needs express onely what is to be done seriously and in cold bloud; in examining all his Conceptions, and measuring all

his Words with that *æquilibrium* of Sence, and that exquisiteness of Judgment, which lets nothing slip but what is exact and judicious. It consists, in fine, in having the strength to resist the temptation, which a man naturally has to make ostentation of his Wit; as that impertinent Historian does, who in the Defeat of the *Parthians* by the Emperour *Severus*, makes *Osroes* escape, by getting into a Cave planted about with Laurels and Myrtles, wherein he makes himself ridiculous, while he thinks to be divertive; which is one of the most slippery places that an Author could fall upon. And that senceful Spirit, that Character of Wisdom, which History requires, is a kind of Attention over ones self, which does not allow it self any Exaggeration, and which takes continual Precautions against those daring Imaginations whereto he is subject, whose Mind is too quick and volatile, or over fertile; that he may set down great things in few words, as *Salust* does, who holds great Councils, gives Battels, takes Cities, conquers Kingdoms, with a shortness of Discourse, and a swiftness of Expression, which is understood at half a word. *Tacitus* has all the Sence that is requisite, answerably to his close way of writing; but he has not enough of it to be intelligible. A man is sometimes put into an im-

pa-

Delectus verborum habendus, & pondera singulorum examinanda. Fab. l. 10. c. 3.

Lucian. de conscrib. Hist.

patience at the Precipitations of that Author, who loſes much of his Gracefulneſs, and falls into Obſcurity, meerly upon this ſcore, that he will needs confine in too few words what ought to have a greater Extent, The humour he has to be too conciſe puts me out of all humour, by reaſon of the little Inſtruction he gives me, in things which he does not ſufficiently unravel. *Polybius* and *Appianus* are ſometimes too liberal of their Diſcourſe: and there is a kind of Judicious Taciturnity, which raiſes a better comprehenſion of the Grandeut of the things which are ſpoken of, than all the words that are too weak to do it. 'Tis a Maſter-talent to ſuppreſs what cannot well be ſaid; and it is the principal part of an Hiſtorian, to diſtinguiſh between that which admits of Extenſion and Reſtriction, and ſo to give every thing its juſt meaſure, that there may be a ſtrict obſervance of *decorum*. For *Livy*, as diffus'd as he is, does not tire out the Reader's patience, becauſe he is judicious where he ſeems to be moſt tedeous. But *Thucydides*, keeping too cloſely to ſound Sence, does ſometimes fall into a kind of harſhneſs and drought, which a man would hardly pardon in him, were it not for the Purity and Excellency of his Style. So hard a matter is it to write with a ſtrict obſervance of Sence, with-

without loſing ſomewhat of thoſe Beauties, which might be imployed if a man were not ſo prudent. But however let an Author be ſtill of this perſuaſion, that the greateſt Beauty of any Production is always the ſound Sence of it: men are wearied with all elſe, but ſound Sence never tires them. It is by this conſtant current of ſound Sence that *Philip Comines*, notwithſtanding the impure and unrefin'd Language of his Age, has merited the eſteem and approbation of ours. But of all the modern Hiſtorians there is not any one has writ with a greater obſervance of the ſenceful Character, than *Mariana* in his Hiſtory of *Spain*. It is a Maſter-piece of the laſt Ages, onely upon the ſcore of that Quality. There is obſervable through that whole Work a wiſe Precaution, which never allows him to expatiate too much in the moſt plauſible paſſages, nor yet to betray any negligence in thoſe that are not ſuch: and that ſo judicious an Evenneſs of Hand, which is always the ſame in the inequality of the matters, treated of by that Author, is but little known to the Hiſtorians of theſe laſt times. But the Talent of a ſenceful *Reflection* on things is not ſufficient, without that of *purely expreſſing* them.

IV.

IV.

What it is to write Purely.

AN Hiſtorian, who makes it his deſign to be read by Poſterity, ought to ſtudy the *purity* of writing. Without that inſinuating and inveigling quality, a Hiſtory is likely to be but of a ſhort continuance. 'Tis through this very want of Purity of Style, that ſo many Greek and Latin Hiſtorians mentioned by *Photius* and other Collectors of Libraries, have been loſt in the general Wreck of ſo many other Works, and that of an almoſt infinite number, whereof *Voſſius* gives us an account, there are remaining onely ſuch as have written rationally enough to deſerve reading. A man therefore ought not to concern himſelf in the writing of Hiſtory, if he be not a perfect Maſter of his own Language, and critical in the Purity of it. For when a man has once propos'd to himſelf the Inſtruction of others, his buſineſs is to expreſs himſelf clearly, that he may be underſtood; and when he once ſpeaks well, he forces the Audience of all people; beſides that

Hiſtorico ſermoni decus conciliet perſpicuitas proprietásque verborum. Ben. de Hiſt. l. 1.

Quid tam neceſſarium quam recta locutio? Fab. l. 1.

Cura magna ſentiendi & loquendi, ſed diſſimulatio cura præcipua. L. 9. c. 4.

that, it is to be imagined he ſays nothing as he ſhould do, when he ſpeaks not well; and this Clearneſs of Expreſſion, which is the greateſt divertiſement of Hiſtory, cannot be found but in a pure Style. This Purity conſiſts principally in the Propriety of the Words, in the natural diſpoſition and diſtribution of the Phraſes, and in the prudent and moderate uſe of Figures. The Style ought not to admit of any thing that is improper, far-fetch'd, harſh, mean, over-daring, or obſcure. *Herodotus* had this Purity of Style, and excells therein above all the Greek Authors, as *Cæſar* does above all the Latines. Mens minds grew ruſty in the ſubſequent Ages, wherein there was not any remarkable track of the Purity of the Ancients. But *Q. Curtius*, out of a deſire to be too polite, has loſt ſomewhat of that grand and majeſtick Air, which is ſo becoming in *Saluſt* and *Livy*. Certain it is, that he flouriſhes too much in certain paſſages; as for inſtance, in that of the deſcription of the River *Marſyas*, at the entrance of the third Book; in that of the Adventure of *Abdolominus*, who of a Gardiner became a King, in the fourth; in that of the Siege of *Tyre*, and ſeveral others; wherein there is obſervable an Affectation of Elegance not conſiſtent with the Gravity of Hiſtory, which cannot admit of any thing that

Nihil eſt in Hiſtoria pura & illuſtri brevitate dulcius. Cic. ad Brut.

In ſententiis nihil abſurdum aut alienum, aut ſubinſulſum; in verbis nihil inquinatum, abjectum, non aptum, durum, longè petitum. Cic. de opt. gen. Orat.

that is affected. Moreover, that Purity of Elocution, which is so necessary to History, ought to be kept up with an observance of great Sence. For there's nothing so flat or insipid, as Elegance void of things, and such as says nothing. Nay, it sometimes happens, that an over-studied Purity of Discourse in great Subjects, abates somewhat of their Grandeur, as it appears in the History of the *Indies* by *Maffeus*, and in the Wars of *Flanders* by Cardinal *Bentivoglio*. Both those Authors made it too much their business to please by the Politeness of their Discourse; not reflecting, that the most adorned Beauties are not always those that are most taking, and that the most sumptuous Ornaments disguize the Wearers, as soon as they are excessive and disproportionate.

Non debet quisquam, ubi maxima rerum momenta versantur, solicitus esse de verbis. Fab. l. 8. c. 3.

Ut monilibus & margaritis, quæ sunt ornamenta fœminea, deformantur viri; nec habitus triumphalis, quo Augustus, fœminæ decet. Fab. l. 11. c. 1.

Ornatur omnis, non tam sua, quàm rei cui adhibetur, conditione constat. Ibid.

V.

Of the Simplicity of Writing.

THere is also a further Obligation incumbent upon an Historian, to observe a Simplicity of Elocution, to avoid the Air that is pompous and affected, both which are contrary to the grand Character which History is to look after; in regard that whatever is great ceases to be so, as soon as it is devested of that Simplicity which it ought to have; and what is joyntly simple and great doubles the Grandeur of it, and becomes sublime. Nor is there any thing that instructs better, or more cajoles the publick Belief, than that Simplicity of Style, which was so much cultivated by the Ancients, and is so little known to the Moderns: whatever exaggerates has a counterfeit Air; and Nature, which ought to be imitated in all things, expresses her self with as much simplicity as may be. But to make a full discovery of that Simplicity, which is so necessary to, and consistent with, a Grandeur of Style, it is to be observed that there are three sorts of it, to wit, a Simplicity

Si oratio perderet gratiam simplicis & inaffectati coloris, perderet & fidem. Fab. l. 9. c. 4.

plicity in the words, ſuch as that of *Ceſar*; a Simplicity in the Sentiments, ſuch as that of *Salluſt*; and a Simplicity in the Deſign, and in the Diſtribution of the Deſign, ſuch as that of *Thucydides*, ſo much celebrated by *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus*. Thoſe Authors of the Moderns, who have come neareſt that Character, are amongſt the *French*, *Philip de Comines*; *Guicciardine* amongſt the *Italians*, *Buchanan* amongſt the *Scots*, and *Mariana* amongſt the *Spaniards*: moſt of the others endeavour not to keep themſelves up by the Purity, Politeneſs, and the other Ornaments of Diſcourſe, but onely when their Abilities will not reach to the obſervance of that Simplicity; and they paraphraſe the truth, when they have not the ſtrength to deliver it naked. Happy is that man who can arrive thereto when he is concerned to write; ignorant perſons may underſtand him, while the intelligent are charm'd with him. But there is not any thing of greater difficulty to attain, than that even and natural Air, which contributes ſo much to the Simplicity of Style. There is an extraordinary *Genius* requiſite in him who would ſpeak things ſimply, without falling into the mean and frigid Style. For when he ſtudies Simplicity, there is not any thing he ought more to fear than Meanneſs of Expreſſion. But wherein does

In judicio de Thucyd.

does this admirable Simplicity consist, which is the sovereign Perfection of a great Work, and what is meant by writing simply? In this, that a man should make use of the most proper and most ordinary words, but yet such as are full of great sence, as that Prince does, on whom *Homer* bestows a concise, pleasant, and significant Eloquence, without any superfluity. It is for a man to think and speak pertinently what he has to think and say, without giving too great a Vivacity to his Expression, as *Strada* does; and without giving too much Lustre to his Conceptions, as *Grotius* does. It consists in a mans having ordinary and natural Sentiments, without making so many Ratiocinations and Reflections, as *Davila* does, in his History of the Troubles of *France*; for when a man is so much taken up with Ratiocination, it is not Nature, but Art and Study that speak; and those so much studied Discourses smell of the School and the Declamation. It consists in not intermixing more Ornament in the Discourse than the Modesty of Truth can well bear withal. It consists in expressing that natural and simple Air

Homerus brevem quidem, cum animi jucunditate propriam, carentem superfluis, eloquentiam Menelao dedit, quæ sunt virtutes generis primi. Fab. l. 12. c. 10.

Exponere simpliciter & sine ulla exornatione. Cic. de Invent. l. 2

Non dicere ornatius quam simplex ratio veritatis ferat. Cic. de Orat. l. 1.

Xenophontis illam jucunditatem inaffectatam, quam nulla affectatio consequi possit, ut ipsa sermonum Gratia simplex videatur. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

of

of *Xenophon's*, which all imaginable Affectation cannot come near. It consists, in fine, in being Master of that miraculous gift of Retrenching what is superfluous out of the Discourse; which *Phocion* was so excellently possess'd withall, and of whom *Demosthenes*, as great a Student as he was of that Simplicity, was wont to say, when he saw him ascending the Theatre to refute him, *See the Iron Instrument which is to cut off all the superfluity of my words.* The better to establish this Character, which besides a great stock of Wisdom and sound Sence, requires great Exercise and much Meditation, a man ought to avoid being conversant with those Authors, whose Imaginations are over fertile, and so to shun that profusion of frivolous Conceptions and forc'd Expressions, and that Fustian way of writing into which men are apt to fall, when they are not exact Pursuers of sound Sence, and have not their Minds well poised. For Models in this way of writing a man is to propose to himself onely the Ancients, and amongst them he is to make choice onely of the most Eminent for the Simplicity of their Style. *Hermogenes* proposes *Theocritus* and *Anacreon* for great Models of that simplicity, of which their Writings are a sufficient Testimony. *Herodotus* seems to *Longinus* to be over-daring. *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*

Plutarch.

Herm. de Ideis l. 2.

licarnassæus charges *Thucydides*, as simply as he writes, with inserting too many matters of fact in some of his Narrations. *Xenophon* and *Polybius* are too full of Moralizations, and many times break off the Thread of the History by their Reflections. *Diodorus Siculus* intermixes too much Learning in his Discourse. *Plutarch* may pass for a great Original of that simplicity which we look after, for he has observ'd it in all he has written. *Titus Livius* does not appear to me more admirable upon the score of all his other great Qualities, than he does upon this. The current of his History is like the course of a great River, which glides away majestically; whereas the History of *Tacitus* may be compared to a rich and plentiful River, but subject to Inundations: he is not sufficiently well poiz'd in what he thinks, and he is many times forc'd and harsh in what he says, merely because he is not simple. *Mariana* is one of the most accomplish'd amongst the modern Historians, becau'e he is the most studious to express himself simply. For there is not any thing of this simplicity of Style to be found in great Subjects, but what is always attended with Grandeur and Excellency. Those are the Qualities from which proceeds that primitive Ground-work of Perfection which History requires, and which may be call'd

(as

(as I may so say) the first Elements of that Beauty which it ought to have, and which ought also to be more predominant in the Fancy, and in the whole Character of the Historian, than in his Style and Discourse. Take now the other Lines which are to be added thereto for the completing of it, and which I briefly hint at, observing no other order than that wherein they present themselves to my mind. I begin with the matter and form, that is to say, with what is most essential to History.

VI.

The Matter of History.

THE Matter fit to exercise the Art of an Historian is of a vast extent, since it is to comprehend all the Actions of Men, relating to Peace, War, Counsels, Negotiations, Embassies, Intrigues, and all the different Adventures which are occurrent in Humane Life. *Cicero* requires two Qualities in the matter of History, that the things should be great, and that they should be worthy to

In rebus magnis memoriâque dignis historiam versari. Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

Historiam assuetam discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines, non humillium minutias indagare causarum. —— Ammian. Marcell. l. 26.

be communicated to the publick. No man has better explicated the Choice which an Historian ought to make of his Subject than *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* has done, in the Preface of his History, and in his Judgment upon *Thucydides*, where he prefers the Choice which *Herodotus* had made of his Subject before that of *Thucydides*, for the Reasons he alleges for it. But as it happens many times, that what is false has the Air of what is true, so there is a great perspicacity and discernment requisite to separate the true Motives of important Actions, from those which are onely colourable and pretentional, and prudently to make choice of the matter, which wholly derives its Beauty and Curiosity from the disciplination and distribution of the Circumstances, and from the Order whereto what is too indeterminate ought to be reduc'd, by restraining it within the natural extent of the Limits which it ought to have. When it shall have been so reduc'd, let the Historian become Master of it, by a profound Meditation of his Subject, whereof he ought to have a perfect information and knowledge: and withall let him be sufficiently exact and religious, never to abuse the Credulity of the publick, by entertaining it with his own Conjectures instead of Truths, or giving it certain things for doubtful ones. Let him read

Equidem non affirmare sustineo, de quibus dubito, nec subducere quæ accepi. Curt. l. 9

read as much as possibly lies in him, to the Source of the Instructions which he has been supplied withall, in order to his making a just discernment thereof. Let him not advance any thing upon common Reports, whose Authors are always uncertain. Let him not affirm things but upon very sure Memorials, and very faithful Relations. Let him not be too slightly confident of the sincerity of those Historians who were his Predecessors, lest he be led out of the way by following ill Guides. Let him make a great distinction between Relations which are partial, or suspected of Prepossession, and those that are not such. Let him always stand upon his guard against the Partialities of those who furnish him with Memorials, in regard that Preoccupation never makes any but false Histories. *Herodotus*, whose History is so fabulous, according to the sentiment of *Cicero*, had onely wretched Memorials to work upon, as *Josephus* pretends. *Thucydides*, desirous to make his advantage of the others miscarriage, confin'd himself to the History of his own time, not trusting any other person, and writing onely what he had seen himself, or learned from creditable persons, and out of Memorials which he got together with great cost, not onely on the *Athenians* side, but also on that of the *Lacedæmonians*, that he might have

Apud Herodotum sunt innumerabiles fabulæ. De Leg. l. 1.

Marcellin. in vita Thucyd.

have the Informations of both Parties. *Xenophon*, *Polybius*, and *Procopius*, took in a manner the same course. *Dion Cassius* acknowledges in his History, that he spent ten years in preparing the Materials of it. *Petrarch* affirms, that *Sallust* went into *Africa*, to observe himself the Situation of the places, whereof he was to give an account in his History of the War of *Jugurth*, as being unwilling to trust any but his own Eyes. For the most important matter of all is, for a man to be assur'd of the ground-work on which he writes. *Lucian* makes him a frivolous Historian of his time, who writ the War of *Armenia* upon common reports, having not seen any person who had been in *Syria*, where the Battel was fought. And *Vopiscus* could not be induc'd to write the History of the Emperour *Aurelianus*, but upon the Assurance he received from *Junius Tiberianus*, Minister of State, that he should be furnished with good Memorials. Nor is it sufficient for a man to be himself concerned in Affairs, but he must also have a Character of Spirit fit to communicate them to others. *Polybius* affirms, that *Calisthenes* was a Witness of the Engagement between *Alexander* and *Darius*, in the narrow place of *Cilicia*; yet he does commit very great Absurdities in the description of that important Battel, merely

Sallustius maria transgressus dicitur, ut oculis suis crederet de conditionibus locorum. Petrar.

In Præfat. Hist.

Hist. l. 12.

out of his ignorance of Military Affairs, and the order which was obſerv'd in the Engagements of that time. A man ought therefore above all things to be very well aſſur'd of his matter, which he never fails of if he have a good Apprehenſion; but he may be defective in point of Aſſurance, if he have not the diſcernment requiſite as to the matters of fact, which are advanc'd. How many falſe Memorials are there produc'd, becauſe the Sources thereof are ſpoil'd by intereſſed perſons? And if there be not any thing more common than the Materials deſign'd for Hiſtory, for all may be good in order thereto: it may alſo be ſaid, that there is not any thing more rare than that Certainty or Aſſurance whereby they ought to be attended, in order to their being proper for it, and which is hardly found, becauſe there is a Preoccupation of all ſides. Upon which account we ought to eſteem that ſentiment of *Boccalini*, as to this point, when he adviſes a man not to write any more than what he has ſeen, and not to ſuffer any thing to be publiſh'd till after his death: by which means he is aſſur'd of what he ſays, and Prepoſſeſſion has no part therein. But let a man be careful above all things to pitch upon great Subjects, ſuch are as capable of keeping themſelves up by their own ſtock and ſtrength; a lofty matter

Raggua di Parnaſ.

gives lustre and weight to the words; and in low Subjects Art must play its part, and supply their weakness.

VII.

The Form of History.

THE Form which ought to be given to History is that which is most essential thereto: 'tis this onely makes it great or little, and it is by this we discover the measure and extent of his *genius* who is the Author of it. The person therefore who would write well must have a mind susceptible of great *Idea's*, and capable of Elevation; to the end that making himself Master of his Subject, he may invest his matter into what Form he pleases. 'Tis by this draught that *Livy* gives his History a Character of Grandeur, which has not any thing like it in all the other Historians, by imprinting upon all the Subjects whereof he treats, the Colours whereof they are capable, according to their own worth. 'Tis thus that he gives the last Kings of *Rome* all the Arrogance which their absolute Independence inspir'd them withall; that

that he diversifies the Spirit of the Republick by the uncivilliz'd Vertue of the first Consuls, by the popular Insurrections of the Tribunes, by the Austerity of the Government of the Decemvirs, by the Luxury and Deliciousness of the last Consuls; that he distinguishes every Age and Period of Time, by the *genius* which had been most predominant therein, without confounding the different motions of that *genius* in the different Circumstances of Times, which have not any thing of resemblance; and that he always keeps himself up at the same height, by the great representations he makes of the things whereof he treats. On the contrary, *Tacitus* gives all his matters in a manner the same Form; all is done in him by Political Considerations; the persons he speaks of have always their Apprehensions disconsonant to those of other people. It is not their own Character that makes them act, but that of the Historian, who by the limits of a Mind too much restrain'd within it self gives always one and the same Figure to his Expressions, and the same Circumference to his Conceptions; there is a general resemblance and conformity in all. The Political Reflection is the motive and general decypherer and disentanglet of all things. If *Augustus* makes choice of a Successor at his death, 'tis onely that he might

might be the more regretted that he gives them a Governour of the State more wicked than himself. If *Tiberius* makes *Piso* Governour of *Syria*, 'tis done onely to set a Spy over *Germanicus*, who governed *Egypt*, whose glory gave him some umbrage. If the flatteries of *Dolabella* displease him, the reason is, because they are not smart and ingenious enough. Of his sending *Sylla* into Exile the reason is, that he look'd upon his Taciturnity as proceeding from Dissimulation and Reservedness. The Modesty of that Emperour is onely a smother'd Ambition, his Favours are onely so many Snares, his Moderation is onely a scornful Fierceness, and his Religion is onely a supercilious Personation of it. 'Tis an argument of the Indignation of the Gods, that *Sejanus* becomes the Emperour's Favourite, and is advanc'd to the Ministry of State. *Arruntius* poisons himself upon a political account, to avoid falling into the hands of a Master more brutish than *Tiberius*. He finds Wit even in the Stupidity of the Emperour *Claudius*, and Delicacy even in the Debauches and Brutalities of *Nero*; and he represents as a refin'd piece of Prudence, the bestial humour which was observ'd in some people under the Reign of that Emperour. In fine, all the Characters resemble one the other, Nature has no part in any thing;

Tiberium ascitum, quod ejus arrogantiam introspexerit, & comparatione deterrimâ sibi gloriam quæsiviſſe. Tac. Ann. l. 1.

Dolabella in abſurdam adulationem progreſſus. Tac. Ann. l. 3.

Suſpectabat Sullam, ſocors ejus ingenium callidúmque ſimulatorem interpretando. Ann. l. 13.

Temporibus Neronis ſapientia pro inertia fuit. Id.

thing; her Sentiments are always forc'd therein, and the same *genius* reigns all over, by the impression of the *genius* of the Historian, who is in a manner always the same person. *Mariana* takes a larger Career; the *Romans*, the *Carthaginians*, the *Christians*, the *Arabians*, the *Moors*, the *Mahometans*, make all different Figures in his work. The Spirit of the Author is not diffus'd into the other Spirits, otherwise than to distinguish them according to their Character, making his way always by paths, as different as the different Subjects whereof he treats, do require it. It may be also said, That amongst the Moderns there is not any History greater upon the score of its Form, than that of *Mariana*.

VIII.

VIII.

The Design and End of History.

Alias in Historia leges observandas, alias in Poemate; illa ad veritatem quæque, in hoc ad delectationem referri plerasque. Cic. de Leg. 1.

THe main Design of *Romance* is onely to divert, and that of *History* to instruct. And this is properly their essential difference, the later having not any thing which it proposes to it self, but the Instruction of the Publick. For as it does not labour onely for the present, so its prospect ought not to be confin'd to the present time, which is transient, but to be directed to Posterity, which continues always. What Extravagance were it then, for a man to think of diverting onely the Age he lives in, when he may benefit all Ages? These are the Reasons which *Lucian* uses, to oblige the Historian, to mind onely what is beneficial, and to regulate the Hearts and Dispositions of men, by the Instructions he gives them. It is a great mistake (says he) to pretend that History may be divided into two parts, the Beneficial and the Divertive; for the Historian ought to mind onely the Benefit which may be gain'd from a sincere and true Account of Affairs; and if he in-

inserts any thing that is Divertive, it must not be out of any design to corrupt the Truth, but to embellish it, and to render it the more acceptable. And to justifie his sentiment, he alleges the Extravagancies of the Historians of his time, who made themselves ridiculous by following other Principles. *Herodotus* made it his business to please the Age wherein he writ; but his Sincerity was so cried down in subsequent times, that he occasioned the Fidelity of the *Greeks* to be suspected in point of History, in the time of *Quintilian*. *Photius* mentions an Historian named *Damascius*, who could think of no other way to please, than by relating things incredible. And *Seneca* complains, that in his time there were some Historians, who had no other Expedient to signalize themselves than by fabulous Narrations: that was always the gust and humour of the meaner sort of people, who are pleas'd with Fictions; not that of Persons of worth and abilities, who love onely the Truth. In the subsequent Ages the *Arabians* intermix'd so many Fables into their Writings, that they spoil'd most of the Historians of their times, by the humour then predominant, of intermixing

Græcis historiis plerunque poeticæ similis est licentia. Fab. l.2.c. 4.

—— & *quicquid Græcia mendax Peccat in historia*—— Juv. Sat. 10.

Quidam incredibilium relatu commendationem parant, & lectorem aliud acturum, si per quotidiana duceretur, miraculo excitant, & opus suum fieri populare non putant, nisi mendacio asperserint. Senec. Qu. Natur. l.7.

sur-

surprizing Adventures in all their fabulous Productions. It was their Perswasion, that in order to Divertisement there was a necessity of telling incredible things. That Fancy infected some of the modern *Greeks*; whence it comes, that the knowledge we have of those Ages by the *Byzantine* History, is not of the surest, because the Authors thereof seem to be of a Character not very exact. And when a man writes according to their Memorials, he ought to be very well precaution'd against so false an *Idea*, to merit belief; inasmuch as the falshood spoils all, and makes onely a Fable of the Truth. Nay the truest things ought not to be related, when they once appear incredible or extraordinary, if a man gives them not an Air of truth, or at least a Colour of probability. This is done by *Thucydides*; and though he found *Herodotus* in so great esteem, as that some gave his Books the names of the Muses, he made it his business to speak onely the truth, without minding how he pleas'd. *I had rather* (says he) *displease by speaking the truth, than divert by relating fables; in regard that by displeasing I may possibly benefit, and I may haply prejudice by endeavouring to divert.* Let therefore this be granted, that there is not any thing so excellent in History, as what is real; and that Truth being the greatest divertisement of it, that

Lucian. de Hist. conscrib.

Utilitatem juvandi prætulerunt gratiæ placendi. Plin. præf. hist. nat. de Thucyd. & aliis hist.

that very Historian who would endeavour to divert, ought to advance onely what is true.

IX.

That Truth is the onely means, whereby History advances towards its end; and how it is found.

TRuth being the onely means, whereby History may securely instruct, ought also to be the principal rule of it, that it may be the ground-work of the publick belief, as it ought to be. But where is it to be found? Is there any thing in the world that lies more conceal'd than Truth? For besides the Clouds and Mists whereby it is naturally surrounded, and sometimes rendred inaccessible, it is also begirt with all the Disguizes, which mans Heart is capable of. And if the ordinary Ignorance of those who write, and are so short sighted as to the prospect they should have before them, be an obstacle to the knowledge of Truth, their want of Sincerity,

rity, or voluntary Insincerity, is a much greater. For how many false Judgments do men make by the false prospects which Passion or Interest gives them, and by the preoccupations which Error or Opinion are wont to inspire prepossessed Minds withall? In fine, Truth being of a nature so unknown to men, either by reason of its own obscurity, or by the weakness of their abilities, or want of attention, there is not any thing more difficult, than to communicate it to the publick in its purity, and without any adulteration. And as it is continually corrupted and profan'd by the baseness of Flatterers, most Historians being ordinarily Court-Pensioners; so a man ought to bid defiance to hope or fear, as soon as he has once concern'd himself in writing, that he may have the courage to be a constant deliverer of the truth. But if it suffices not that a man be willing to speak it, he must also be able to do it, by searching after it in the purity of its source, by seeking it in the most curious Closets, and by consulting the Instructions of those who have been concern'd in the Affairs, so to unravel what is most mysterious in the most secret Intrigues. The Historian above all things must well study Man in general, make a discovery of his disposition by the most fantastick and most unexpected passages, find out the great-

est

eſt weakneſſes of his heart, dive into his true Sentiments, that he may not impoſe falſe ones upon him; and judge of him by thoſe natural and unforeſeen motions which he is guilty of, when he leaſt thinks of them. 'Tis by this means that he deſcries the real Sentiments of the Soul, the Heart having not the time to recollect in order to its diſguizing of it ſelf: for it forces it ſelf as ſoon as it comes to reflect, as *Tacitus* offers it to our obſervation in *Agrippina*, and *Octavia* the Siſter of *Britannicus*. For as ſoon as he was ſmitten with the Poiſon which *Nero* had ordered to be given him at the Banquet, wherein he procured his death, *Octavia* was troubled as well as *Agrippina*; there was a viſible Conſternation in their Countenances; but whereas *Octavia* was in hopes of being married to *Nero*, and that *Agrippina* his Mother, a Woman naturally ambitious, was deſirous to reign, their political Reflection reaſſur'd them; and not to give any diſguſt to the Emperour, who rid out of the way his Rival to the Empire, they ſmother their Sentiments, ſilence their grief, and continue the Repaſt with the ſame Gayety of Humour, as if nothing had happen'd, while the Prince gave up his laſt gaſp in the Antichamber. Now this muſt be look'd on as a great piece of Contrivance in an Author, who would give us an exact account of thoſe

Agrippina pavor & conſternatio mentis emicuit, quamvis vultu premeretur. Octavia, quamvis rudibus annis, dolorem, charitatem, affectus omnes abſcondere didicerat. Ita poſt breve ſilentium repetita convivii lætitia. Tac. ann. l. 13.

whose History he relates. But this is a Consideration not much heeded, and is the reason that we have so few Histories. There is a Character of Spirit proper for the delivering of things as they are, which is not common; it is one of the Talents of *Thucydides*, the most faithful and most sincere of all the Historians: he has a gusto and liking for the Truth, and a discernment to distinguish between that which is true and false, together with an Accuracy of Spirit, which has gain'd him the approbation and esteem of all Nations. *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* commends him above all things for his keeping close to the Truth, alledging that he never spoke any thing against his Conscience: wherein he has surpass'd *Herodotus*, whose design it was onely to please. For *Strabo* affirms, that he intermix'd Fables into his History, out of a pure frolick to render it divertive. The Historians of the lower Class became so great Flatterers, that their defect in point of Fidelity diverted *Vopiscus* from writing the History of his own time; but the Governour of the City, a Favourite of the Emperour's, in a Discourse he had with him as they walk'd abroad, took off that scruple by representing to him, that the most considerable Historians had been deceiv'd in many things. *Pollio affirms, that the same thing has happen'd to

Rerum gestarum pronunciator sincerus Thucydides. Cic. de clar. orat.

In judicio de Thucyd.

Scribe secura, dicas quod velis, habiturus mendaciorum comites quos Historica eloquentia miramur autores. Vopisc. præf. hist.

* Apud Florid. Sa.

Cæsar in his *Commentaries*, because he took not the leisure to examine what he said. Now if the greatest men are subject to these miscarriages, what will be the case of the ordinary sort of Writers? And if Truth does not always make a discovery of it self in its purity to extraordinary *Genius's*, how shall it expose it self to meaner persons, who upon the very score of their Quality cannot deliver any thing without changing the Circumstances thereof, either by diminishing or augmenting the Objects? For there is not any thing of greater rarity than an exact Character, and such as is fit to communicate things as they are: they are not said otherwise than as they are conceiv'd; they are not conceiv'd, but answerably to the frame of the Imagination: and of several persons who may have seen the same thing, there are not many times two that deliver it after the same manner, every one relating what he had seen according to the *Idea* he has taken thereof, and suitably to the frame of his own Apprehension. The Talent therefore most requisite in an Historian, is that exact and faithful Inclination of declaring the truth, in all Circumstances conducive to its making an Impression in, and meriting the belief of the publick. But it is not yet sufficient to History, that it communi-

Neminem scriptorum, quantum ad historiam pertinet, non aliquid esse mentitum. Vopisc. ib.

nicate what is true; there is further requisite a certain manner of Expression to speak it well, and that is called the *Style*. Let us now see which is the most convenient to History.

X.

The Style proper to History.

THe Style is the Form of the Discourse, and the Manner after which a man writes: the most proper to every one is that which is most conformable to his *Genius*, and he ought to follow it without any violence. So that a Style having an intermixture of several Styles is always vicious. This is a defect of *Strada* in his History of *Flanders*, who by the excellency of his Imagination, and by his great Reading, had fraught his mind with different Characters. And that intermixture which is observable in his manner of writing, how pleasant soever it may be, abates somewhat of its perfection. *Mariana*, a person of the same Society, has more substance, and is more even in his Style. But the most proper Style for an Historian is that which hath most the Character of Truth, and where-

Verum ipsum in scribendo sinceritate candoréque elucet. Melch. Can. in loc. Theol. l. 11. c. 6.

wherein that natural Lustre of Sincerity, which ordinarily attends Truth, is more conspicuous: for what has that Air is easily credited. *The Style of History* (says *Lucian*) *ought to be clear and natural; in as much as clearness is the rule of what it ought to speak, as truth is the rule of what it ought to think.* The Discourse of it ought to be free, though it seem to be restrain'd; and it does not so much require Numerousness, as a rotundity of Style, that it may have that unconcernment which renders it natural. But in regard the Historian ought to read the ancient Authors, in order to the framing of a Style according to his *Genius*, we shall give him here what he shall find observable in that Study, for his framing to himself a Method proper to his Design. The Style of *Herodotus* is gentle, evenly flowing and pleasant. That of *Thucydides* is more noble, and implies more Grandeur, but it is not so natural: nay, he has some harshnesses which render him obscure; and he is less remarkable for Numerousness and Rotundity than *Herodotus*. *Xenophon* writes with an insinuating and milde Air; his Dis-

De conscrib. hist.

Quanquam vincta sit, soluta videri debet oratio. Fab. l. 9. c. 4.

Historia non tam finitos numeros, quàm orbem contextumque desiderat. Ibid.

In Herodoto omnia leniter fluunt; tum ipsa dialectus habet jucunditatem. Ibid.

Thucydides præfractior, ita nec rotundus, in eo orbem orationis desidero. Cic. in Bruto.

Obscurus est, quia pressus. Ibid.

course, which may be likened to a pure and clear Water, has nothing comparable to it in Antiquity, unless it be the Style of *Cæsar*; for there has not been any thing writ in the Latine Tongue of greater purity. The Observation of a modern Critick, who takes notice of a difference of Style in the Books of the Civil Wars, which he pretends are not written so purely as the War of the *Gauls*, is a delicacy beyond my apprehension: I am not so subtilly observant as to find it so; and I appeal to the Sentiment of *Suetonius*, who makes no distinction between them. I must acknowledge, that I am extremely taken with the Elegance and Simplicity of that Author; no person ever had the Talent of writing more clearly. But the Transcendency of *Livy*'s Discourse puts me into an Ecstacy; it is near two thousand years that that Historian has been heard with respect by all people, upon the score of that Majestical Tone wherewith he speaks, which has been the admiration of all Ages. Nor is my mind taken up with any thing so much as that admirable choice of words, always proportionate to his Sentiments, and that Expression of Sentiment always conformable to the things whereof he speaks. In fine, he of all the Authors has best pitch'd upon the Style which *Cicero* advises for History; and he is that great Model which

Tribus libris de bello civili Cæsari falsò asscriptis nihil durius, nec candori Cæsariano minus conveniens. Florus Sabin. in calum. Ling. Lat.

Genus orationis fusum, & cum lenitate quadam æquabili profluens, sine judiciali asperitate, & sententiarum forinsium aculeis prosequendum. Cic. de orat. l. 2.

which *Buchanan*, *Mariana*, *Paulus Æmilius*, *Paulus Jovius*, and all those who have outlasted their own Ages, have propos'd to themselves, as to the manner wherein History ought to be written. *Tacitus* is not so proper for that purpose; for he, by reason of his startling and surprising Sallies, may be compar'd to Lightning, which does not so much lighten as dazle. *Paterculus* and *Florus* have made a kind of intermixture of the florid, delicate, and divertive Air, with the meaner sort of writing. The Authors of the History of *Augustus*, as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, *Spartianus*, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Vopiscus*, and the rest, have degenerated into the frigid and impure Style, which has not any thing of that noble Simplicity of the precedent Ages. *Salust* has somewhat of Grandeur and Sublimity in his way of writing; in which respect *Quintilian* compares him to *Thucydides*. *Quintus Curtius* is conspicuous and florid. And upon these two ways, which are in a manner the two onely rational ones, that a man can make use of, he may examine which of the two is the most proper for History: and that question is the most important of any that can be made upon this subject.

Salustius rerum Romanarum florentissimus autor. Tac. hist. l. 3.

Salustio vigente amputatæ sententiæ, & obscura brevitas, fuere pro cultu. Sen. l. 11. ep. 114.

XI.

Whether the Noble Style, or the Florid, be more proper for History.

IN a queſtion of ſuch conſequence as this, which is not yet well decided, it will be ſufficient to allege the Reaſons which may ſerve for the deciſion of it, when a man has not the Authority to decide it himſelf. *Saluſt* has a certain Grandeur in his Style; but he has ſome harſh Expreſſions, which render him dry in ſome places, becauſe he had derived that unpoliſhedneſs from the original Expreſſions of *Cato*; which gives a Serioufneſs to his Diſcourſe, and that has the Air of Severity. On the contrary, there is not any thing more polite than *Quintus Curtius*; it is a flower of admirable Expreſſion, which extremely pleaſes the *Virtuoſi*. But the buſineſs now in hand is to examine, whether the harſh Style of *Saluſt*, how harſh ſoe're it may be, is not more ſound and more proper for Hiſtory, it giving (as indeed it does) Weight, Vigour, and Grandeur to the Diſ-

Verba excerpſit Saluſtius ex originibus Catonis. Suet. in Aug.

Saluſtius ſcriptor ſeria & ſeverè oratione. A. Gel. l. 17. c. 18.

course. Has it not even its Beauties and Excellencies? Is it not in that harshness of Style, that we sometimes find those fierce and daring Graces, which *Demetrius Phalereus* says that *Homer* has so well express'd, in the Adventure of *Polyphemus* in the *Odissey*, where- Ib. l. 9.
of he is the first Author, as *Demetrius* pretends in his Treatise of Elocution: that is to say, those Graces which have nothing of softness or effeminacy, and which please without any affected and superfluous dress. The same Author cites several Examples of them taken out of *Xenophon*, who has the art of making those things pleasant, which have not ought intrinsecally to recommend them. In this does properly consist that austere Style, which *Hermogenes* prefers before the soft De Ideis, l. 1. c. 5. & l. 2. de Invent.
Style, when he says, that an absolutely simple Narration has many times more force and vigour, than that which is adorn'd and florid; inasmuch as the severe Style may have Grandeur, and the milde Style cannot ascend above Mediocrity: and for this reason does he place sound Sence, how much soever it may admit of negligence, amongst the qualities of the noble and elevated Style. This (says he) was the Character of *Pericles*, whom *Demosthenes* propos'd to himself, in the Acquest of that vigorous and vehement Eloquence, wherein he has excell'd. *Hyperides*

(says

(says he elsewhere) is chargeable with Negligence, but yet he has Grandeur: his Style is rough, dry, and Sceleton-like; but it is noble and sublime. For that Austerity of Style, which was the true Character of the *Greeks*, is onely an exactness of sound Sence, and an adjusted and correct Reason, which (without minding what glitters) aims onely at what is solid; it has nothing that's counterfeit in its Sentiments; all its Attention is wholly bent upon a Sobriety of Discourse, which has not any thing but what is senceful and simple. And this is also the Style which *Plutarch* attributes to *Demosthenes*, and which *Dionysius Halicarnassaeus* does not distinguish from the grand and sublime. 'Tis in fine that Vigour of Expression, which gives the Discourse an Air of Excellency and Majesty, whereby it becomes great and solid. 'Tis thus that *Cæsar* has somewhat that's more noble in the simplicity of his Discourse, than *Tacitus* has in all the pomp of his words; and there are some Negligences in the ancient Authors, which are equivalent to all the exactness and regularity of the Moderns. Not

Austerus Græcâ consuetudine. Cornel. Front. de different. vocum.

Artis severa si quis amat effectus, mentémque magnis applicat, priùs more frugalitatis lege polleat exactâ. Petr.

Si juvenes verba atroci stylo effoderent, jam illa grandis oratio haberet majestatis suæ pondus. Ibid.

Historica locutio, ubi munditiem retinuerit, majora ornamenta non requirat; simplex, pura, naturalis sit, nec Atticam siccitatem referre possit. Beni, de hist. l. 1.

but

but that the florid Style may be of use in those small Histories, which cannot keep themselves up by their own intrinsecal worth. The Princess of *Montpensier* ought to be writ with all the Elegance that Art is capable of; but the History of the War of *Paris* and of our last Troubles in *France*, ought to have a greater Air of writing. In small Subjects there is a Delicacy requisite; in great ones, Vigour and Dignity are required. Let *Paterculus* be polite and ornamental in the Character he has taken; but let *Livy* be transcendent and serious; in as much as ordinary Beauties stand in need of Ornament e're they can shew themselves, and the great ones, who have their Attractions within themselves, need it not. Not to urge that Truth, which is the Soul of History, is apt to fall under suspicion, when she is once too sumptuously adorn'd; nor that Negligence has more of the Air of Sincerity. And this is what's particularly to be observ'd upon the account of Style, after the general Notions I have given thereof: but whereas it cannot be put in use otherwise than by *Narration*, let us examine how that ought to be.

XII.

XII.

Narration.

Historia narratio rei gestæ, per quam ea quæ facta sunt dignoscuntur. Isidor. l. 1. Orig.

Expositio præteritorum temporum. Fab. l. 4. c. 2.

Custodia fidelis rerum gestarum. Tit. Liv. l. 6.

History (properly speaking) being onely a recital of things past, and in the order they came to pass, ought to be a continued Narration. So that there is not any thing more essential to it, than that a man know well how to relate; but there is not also any thing more difficult. For what Art is there not requisite to prevent the distraction of the Reader, and to keep him in a continual posture of Attention? What Prudence is there not requisite to mingle and scatter up and down those Colours, which are fit to put things into a state of Verisimilitude, and to intermix ever and anon those Insinuations, those Explications, those Graces, that Fire, that Vivacity, which keep the Narration from languishing? What Dexterity is there not requisite for a man to display his Art and Wit in what he says, and yet still to conceal it; and by a great variety of Expressions, Figures, Conceptions, to scatter Ornaments up and down upon the Passages that are capable there-

thereof, yet without ever discovering them? What Discernment and Recollection is there not requisite to know what ought to be said and what ought not to be said; to speak, and to be silent; not to stick any longer than is fit upon the places he is to pass through; to expose things at large or minutely, according as necessity or *decorum* require; to dilate, and abbreviate them; to heighten by a happy Expression the Passages which are not happy of themselves; and never to tire out the Reader by an excessive Uniformity? In fine, what Judgment is there not requisite accurately to distinguish between what suits well, and what does not? For 'tis upon this that the whole Beauty of *Narration*, and all the Grace of History depends. But Narration is complete, when it has not any thing that's superfluous. Thus you have in a word that whereto the Perfection, which it is capable of, may be reduc'd. The Precepts of *Cicero* and *Quintilian* say no more; after whom I have not any thing to say. For when the Superfluities are once retrenched, when those needless Circumlocutions and those Epithets, which are introduc'd merely for ostentation, and all those frivolous Ornaments of Discourse are suppres'd, every thing hastens to its period. Vigour, Smartness, Dignity, all is kept up in it, and nothing languishes.

Dare orationi varios vultus; gaudent enim res varietate. Fab. l. 9. c. 2.

Circumcisa expositio rei quæ supervacuis caret. Fab. l. 4. c. 1.

As

Densus, brevis, semper instans sibi contitatis affectibus Thucydides. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

As to this point *Thucydides* surpasses *Herodotus*, who is too diffusive in certain Passages, wherein he gives too much scope to the Excellency of his Imagination. *Salust* is an Author of an exact and concise Character; he is principally recommendable upon the score of the swiftness and rapidity of his Discourse; 'tis that which animates it, and makes it so lively. The Narration of *Cæsar* is admirable for its Purity and Eloquence, but it is not lively enough; and it is defective as to that force and vigour which he quarrell'd at in *Terence*. As for *Titus Livius*, he has an Air of relating things which is very insinuating, by reason of the intermixture he makes of small things with great ones in his Narration: in as much as an over-long Continuation of great things spends the Spirits, by reason of the Attention they require, and small things give them some relaxation. 'Tis according to the same Method that he diversifies his Adventures, that he makes a vicissitude of mournful and pleasant things, that he disposes what is splendid and what is heavy, according to a wise and judicious Tempe-

Thucydides verbis aptus & pressus. Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

Immortalem illam Salustii velocitatem consecutus Livius. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

Ita Salustiana brevitas, quâ nihil apud aures eruditas perfectius esse potest, captanda. Ibid.

Livius in narrando miræ jucunditatis, clarissimique candoris, ita ducuntur omnia, tum rebus tum personis accommodata. Ibid.

rament,

rament, to keep the Reader in breath by that variety. For a Narration grows flat, when it has not a diversity of Accidents, Adventures, Figures, and Expressions. Nay, a man must give certain Intervals to things, that so the Reader may have time to breath, and not smother his matter, by an over-intermixture of Occurrences one with another. This is a defect which *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* reproaches *Thucydides* withall, in a Narration of the third Book of his History, wherein he so intermingles the different Interests of the *Athenians*, *Lacedæmonians*, and the other Nations of *Greece*, that he somewhat confounds the several *species*, by a Narration over-charg'd with matter. And this is a defect ordinary enough in fertile Wits. Though the order of the times be the most natural to Narration, in regard it discloses things in the *series* wherein they happen; yet is there however an order of reason in the distribution of Occurrences, which ought to be the particular Study of the Historian. It is onely by this concealed Order that he ingratiates himself with the Reader, makes him take the same prospect of things as he had done himself; that he instils into him his own Sentiments, when he makes him see men acting naturally as they ought to act, and that he shews him their Manners, their Conceptions,

Thucydides creber rerum frequentiâ. Cic. de Orat. l. 2. Tract. de Judic. Thucyd.

Rerum ratio ordinem temporum desiderat. Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

In rebus magnis memoriâque dignis, consilia primùm, deinde acta, postea eventus expectantur. Ibid.

ons, their Designs, their Motives, their Actions as they are in a kind of dependence one upon another, and in that natural Order, wherein there is an exact Correspondence. The Historian, who knows how to manage this without confusion, is a great man. This is the way that is pleasing, and not those extraordinary Emergencies, after which a man runs when he has no Judgment. For there is not any thing more taking, than to see men act in that order: that alone well deliver'd keeps the Mind attentive. As to which particular *Livy* has been the most successful, because he has best followed that Order, by pursuing the course of his History with an intertexture of Discourse, and an always equal and even Concatenation of Actions. *Longinus* has not forborn to observe, that *Thucydides* does sometimes discompose things that were well concerted, merely that he might surprize by his disorder, and so diversifie his Narration: nay, he often relates things past in the present time, in shewing them as if they then actually passed; which raises a greater Expectancy and Attention in the Reader. *Tacitus* has his frequent Sallies, and does not make a consequential delivery of things. That great Sence pent up in few words has not the extent it should have, to be proportionate to the Apprehension of his

Cap. 18.

Rea-

Readers, which is many times o'repreſſed therewith: and as he is not natural in what he relates, nor ever hardly humanizes himſelf, ſo he does not inſtruct as he ought to do. For inſtance; when upon occaſion of the *Papian* Law he explicates the Origine of Laws; or when he elſewhere deſcribes the Privilege of Places of Refuge, he does not go to the Source of the things; he does not clear up any thing to the bottom, or he does it amiſs; as when he would explicate the Religion of the *Jews*, in the fifth Book of his Hiſtory. Nay, his very Style is no way fit for it, which is a great defect in an Hiſtorian, whoſe principal Function is to inſtruct. But after all a Narration is good, howe're it be made, when it pleaſes.

XIII.

Transitions.

THe great Art of Narration, and one of its principal Beauties, consists in *Transitions*. And indeed those delicate and natural Windings, those happy Devolutions from one subject to another, which make the Prosecution of the Discourse engaging; those insinuating Attractions, which conduct the Reader's Mind from object to object, and give him a spacious, yet divertive, Prospect: in fine, all that admirable œconomy of Transition, is that which is most delicate and most sprightly in Narration, which looks always as it were forc'd, never easie and natural, without that Art. It is not enough for a man to understand speaking well, in order to the attaining of this; but he must be eloquent, absolute Master of his Subject, and perfectly know the Connexions and Dependencies of it; for the most proper Transitions ought to be rather in the things themselves, than in the words. So that those Excursions out of Kingdoms into Kingdoms, out of Nations into

into Nations, out of Ages into Ages, without any method or management, are great Deviations and Sallies, in a History any thing well regulated, wherein every thing ought to be disposed and adjusted, as we find in the Structure of a great Palace, the Proportion and Correspondency of whose parts make one of its greatest Beauties. For History is as 'twere a Body, consisting of its several Members by a natural Connexion. As to which particular the History of the Schism of *England*, by *Sanderus*, is very defective amongst the Moderns, as that of *Florus* and *Paterculus* amongst the Ancients. There is not any thing more connected, or more gently flowing, than the Discourse of *Xenophon*. *Livy* has those qualifications in a greater measure; his Narration is an admirable Concatenation, in regard his Transitions are not so much in the words as the things. *Salust* is not of so even a thread. *Tacitus* is less even; if he has any Connexions, they are forc'd, and the thread of his Discourse is much interrupted; which startles the Reader, who cannot follow that Author but with loss of breath. The most difficult Transitions are those which are in the most common things; for a man must keep up himself with an Expression that has not any thing mean in it, notwithstanding the meanness of the Matter; nay find out an

Xenophontis fluens, & sine salebra oratio. Cic.

Expedient to connect things that have not any mutual dependence. 'Tis also in those places that a man ought to use his greatest art and wit. The Reader's Mind is so delicate, that it is not always turn'd as an Author pleases. And therefore those Windings, which it is to be conducted from Adventures to Adventures, ought to be prepar'd by secret Concatenations. For in short, it is many times subject to a ridiculous Coyness, and is in so fantastick an humour as renders it intractable. But what artifice is there not requisite to diversifie those Transitions, between which there should never be any resemblance, that so he may always supply the Reader with new *Ideas*, by not placing the same objects before his eyes? Herein ought the industry of the Historian to be much exercised; for in this consists that Gracefulness of Narration, which alone can make it pleasant and attractive.

XIV.

XIV.

The Circumstances of Narration.

IF a Narration becomes pleasant upon the score of its Transitions, it becomes probable upon that of its *Circumstances*. For nothing renders a man more concern'd than a matter of Fact well circumstanced, which being over-clouded and obscure, as it is in it self, is cleared up by particulars, and by that means becomes sensible, palpable, evident; and there's no way to make one apprehend the progress of great Enterprizes and important Affairs, but that of unveiling them by the different degrees of their Circumstances. So that the art of exposing the Truth in all its dependences, by decyphering what is particular therein, making one of the greatest Beauties of History, the Historian ought to study it with all the care imaginable. Take then what there may be to be observed therein. The grand Secret is, to know how to make a prudent and judicious choice of the Circumstances, fit to give a greater *Idea* of the thing, to imprint in them that colour

which engages Credulity, and by that minute diſſection to render them capable of faſtening on the Mind. A Collection of great and ſmall Circumſtances methodically intermix'd one with another, is of that nature when they are well choſen. For the great Circumſtances raiſe admiration, and the ſmall ones create diverſion, provided they be well choſen, without being aggravated. But, though a Matter of Fact, which is not exactly particularized, does not make any impreſſion; yet is it requiſite, that a man ſhould avoid all thoſe mean, frivolous, and minute Particularities, which debaſe a Subject; for he becomes childiſh, and indeed ridiculous, who inſiſts too much on ſmall things. Such was that impertinent Hiſtorian mentioned by *Lucian*, who makes a very particular deſcription of the *Parthian* King's Veſt, and of the *Roman* Emperour's Buckler, whileſt he is deſcribing the Engagement. Others (ſays he) not minding eſſential things, ſpend their thoughts on what makes nothing to their purpoſe; as he, who having ſaid a word or two of the Battel, which he was to give an account of, falls into a deſcription of the moſt extravagant Adventures of a *Mooriſh* Knight, that could be imagined. Thus does *Procopius* in his Secret Hiſtory, forget to circumſtance what is important, and is very careful in circum-

In conſer. hiſt.

cumſtancing what is not ſo. A man ought therefore, in the relation of a Matter of Fact of conſequence, to know how to ſet off to the beſt advantage the Circumſtances which are moſt proper to clear it up, and to heighten it, by diſtinguiſhing that which is eſſential from that which is not. The moſt complete Model we have in Hiſtory of a great Action related in all the Circumſtances capable of giving it weight and grandeur, is *Hannibal's* March into *Italy*, deſcribed in the 21. Book of *Livy's* Annals. It is in my Judgment the moſt accompliſh'd paſſage of his Hiſtory; and there are few things of that force in Antiquity. Never did greater Deſign enter into a Soul more extraordinary, and never was any thing executed with more confidence or more reſolution. His buſineſs was to come out of *Africa*, to paſs through all *Spain*, to climb over the *Pyrenean* Mountains, to croſs the River *Rhone*, which is ſo large and ſo rapid near its falling into the Sea, and whereof the Shores on each ſide were planted with ſo many Enemies; to open a way through the *Alps*, where none had ever paſſed before; to march all along upon Precipices, to diſpute every foot of Ground he was to go, with People poſted every where in continual Ambuſcado's, amidſt Snow, Ice, Rain, Torrents; to defie Tempeſts and

Thunder, to engage against the Heavens, the Earth, and all the Elements; to have at his heels an Army of an hundred thousand men of different Nations, but all dissatisfied with a Captain, whose Courage they could not imitate. There is a Consternation in the hearts of the Souldiery; *Hannibal* is the onely person undisturb'd; the danger which surrounds him on all sides, raises a trouble in the hearts of the whole Army, but he is not mov'd thereat. All is set down in a minute Particularization of dreadful Circumstances; the image of the danger is expressed in every word of the Historian; and never was there any Representation more complete in History, nor any touch'd with stronger colours, or more lively. Nor is there any thing better circumstanc'd in *Tacitus*, than the Entertainment which the Empress *Messalina* made for *Silius*, her Gallant and Favourite. 'T was a kind of Vintage in all the Ceremonies, the season of Autumn being favourable thereto; Joy, Pleasure, Effeminacy, Lasciviousness, Impudence, Debauchery, all is describ'd with an exquisite delicacy and elegance, and all is particulariz'd succinctly, sencefully, and related in a smart and lively manner: and there is not any thing more judiciously plac'd, to render by so frolicksom a Pourtraiture the Death of *Messalina*, which follows soon after,

Annal. l. 11.

ter, more tragical and more full of horrour. In fine, there are ſome happy Circumſtances which give a Grace to whatever they are applied to; they muſt be known ere they can be imploy'd. Sometimes things become greater by their Circumſtances than they are in themſelves. Let us ſeek out thoſe Circumſtances which are joyntly capable of pleaſing and inſtructing, and ſo prevent the Reader's being wearied out. Let us imitate *D'avila*, who ſo excites Attention by the art he has of Circumſtancing what he ſays. And yet exceſſive Particularizations tire the Mind: let us therefore make a diſtinction between important and neceſſary Circumſtances, and thoſe that are not ſuch. Let us conſult *Lucian*, and his Diſcourſe upon Hiſtory; he is a great Maſter in it. But to make a Narration complete, we are to joyn to the Circumſtances of the things which it ſays, the Motives of the Actions which it relates; for the Motives well couch'd down render a Narration as curious, as the Circumſtances render it probable.

XV.

XV.

Motives.

TO relate the Actions of Men without ſpeaking of their *Motives*, is not to be accounted writing of Hiſtory. Who does ſo, demeans himſelf as a *Gazetteer*, who thinks it enough to deliver the Events of things, without advancing to their Source. As *Ceſar*, who ſimply gives an account of his Marches and his Encampings, without acquainting us with the Motives thereof: all in his Narration is too ſimple and too ſuperficial; and true it is, that he writes onely Memoirs. It is therefore by this Particularization of the Motives which put men upon Action, that Hiſtory becomes it ſelf curious, and that it keeps it ſelf up, eſpecially in important Affairs. He therefore minds onely the Superficiality of things, who relates how they paſs'd without going to their principle. *Reaſon requires* (ſays *Cicero*) *that as in great affairs the*

Rerum ratio vult, ut quoniam in rebus magnis conſilia primùm, deinde acta, poſtea eventus expectantur, in rebus geſtis declarari, non ſolùm quid actum aut dictum ſit, ſed quomodo; & cùm de eventu dicatur, ut cauſa explicentur omnes, &c. De Orat. l. 2.

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deſigns ſhould precede the execution, ſo the Hiſtorian ſhould give an account not onely of the events, but alſo of the motives; and that reporting what has been done, he ſhould explicate how and by what means it was done. Tacitus ſays ſomewhat much to the ſame purpoſe; that the Hiſtorian is concern'd not onely to relate the Events of things, but alſo to diſcover the Ground-work and Principles thereof, and to give ſome account of the Motives. 'Tis by this that an Hiſtorian diſtinguiſhes himſelf, and becomes conſiderable; and nothing is more divertive in a Narration, than the decyphering of what is ſecret and of importance, in the deſigns and intentions of thoſe whoſe Actions it divulges: and as Hiſtory has not any thing curious comparably to that, ſo are there not any Hiſtorians of any fame, who have not endeavoured to ſignalize themſelves upon that ſcore. For nothing does more excite the Curioſity of men, than when they have diſcover'd to them what is moſt conceal'd in the Heart of man, that is to ſay, the ſecret Springs and Reſorts, which make him act in the Enterprizes, which are ordinary to him. It is therefore by this Reaſcenſion to the Cauſe that we diſcover the *genius* of thoſe perſons who are ſpoken of, that we find out the predominant humour which puts them into action, what things they

they are capable of, and that we light on the truth by diving into their intentions. But with how many Falshoods are Histories fraught upon this plausible pretence? And into how many errors have fallen, and do daily fall, unjust, unfaithful, and interessed Historians, who carried on with the Career of their own Conjectures, communicate their own Visions to the publick, in explicating the Designs of those whom they discourse of. As for example, that *Pericles* occasioned the *Peloponnesian* War, upon the score of his Amours to the Curtezan *Aspasia*. That *Xerxes* carried into *Greece* that dreadful Army, of which Historians give us an account, onely out of a design to eat Figs there. That *Anthony* lost the Empire, onely to avoid losing *Cleopatra*. That *Francis* the First of *France* had no motive to bring an Army into *Italy*, but the fair Eyes of a *Milanese* Lady named *Claricia*. There is not any thing more dangerous than this sort of people, who make it their business to search into mens hearts, to guess at their thoughts; who say all they know, and all that comes into their Minds, out of a fear of being defective in telling the truth. This is one of the great Miscarriages of *D'avila*, whose Reasonings are pertinent enough, but whose Conjectures in the Motives of the matters of fact which he alleges,

have

have but little truth in them, if we refer our ſelves to the Sentiments of ancient Courtiers, who had a true account of things from their Fathers. 'Tis therefore when all's done, onely an Action well diſclos'd as to the Motives, and a Secret well div'd into, that gives a great *Idea* of the Ability of the Hiſtorian; that creates a Judgment that he ſpeaks as a perſon well inform'd, and is a great beauty in a Hiſtory. But let an Author, who is ſubject to gueſs at things, be always on his guard againſt his own Prepoſſeſſion; let him not hearken to his Affection, nor to his Averſion, that ſo he may avoid Artifice, and thoſe Colours which he is apt to give things, to turn them to that ſide for which he is prepoſſeſs'd; let him not introduce ſuppoſititious Falſities, to juſtifie his Conjectures, and to bring things to the poſture he would have them in; let him not alleviate or aggravate any thing, as *Tacitus* does, who ſpits his venom every where; or as *Paterculus*, who ſcatters Flowers on all ſides; let him not make men have worſe intentions than they have, as *Herodotus* does, when he ſays that the *Perſians* were called into *Greece* by the *Spartans*, becauſe they could not any longer reſiſt the *Lacedemonians*; nor yet endure them, as *Plutarch* reproaches him with it; nor let him excuſe unjuſt actions by good intentions

Haud facilè animus verum provides, ubi officium odium, amicitia ira, atque miſericordia. Cæſar. apud Saluſt. in Catil.

In Herod.

tentions, as that *Callias* of *Syracuse* did, who justifies all the Actions of *Agathocles*, because he was kind to him, as *Diodorus* observes; nor as *Paulus Jovius* has done in respect of *Cosmo de Medicis* in these last Ages. There are in all Historians some Miscarriages of this kind, because there are few among them who have their heads steddy enough to oppose their Prepossession. But though the Motives in great persons ought regularly to be more excellent, and indeed greater than the Actions; for the Motives depend on them, whereas the Events do not; yet is there no great mistake (the Condition of Grandees considered) in putting into the Scales of their Counsels and Deliberations, some Grains of the Vanity and Weakness whereof they are capable. For it happens many times, that most men determine what they intend to do upon impertinent and ridiculous Motives. There are infinite Examples of it which I omit, to avoid being my self infinite upon this Subject. It is principally requisite, that there be a discovery of the Vanity, the Malice, the Ignorance, the Extravagance of Man's Spirit, which are as it were the Principles thereof, in order to a full discovery of his intentions, and e're we can dive into the weakness of them, which is the grand principle of his Malice; and a man must not be ignorant above all

Excerpt. const. ex Diodoro.

all things, that the Slothfulneſs of moſt Grandees, in examining what is of greateſt concern in Affairs, and the impatience they are in to ſee the iſſue of them, is the Wheel upon which is carried about what is moſt eſſential in their conduct. Theſe are they who ought principally to be known, in regard that being (as they are) the grand Actors upon the Theatre of the World, all things are regulated according to the fantaſtick humour they are in; but it is not to be affirmed, that a man's Reaſon always hits upon the right, when haply he may have done it once by pure chance. There are ſome Hiſtorians in this Age who have loſt their Repute by the exceſſive itch they had to intermingle their own Conjectures in all occurrences, and to communicate themſelves to the publick, together with their Hiſtories. As *Herrera* does, who ſays that the Duke of *Parma* did not what he could againſt the *Dutch*, that he might according to policy keep them the longer upon the ſtage. There is not any thing more oppoſite to the Spirit of the Hiſtorian, who ought to be faithful and ſincere, than thoſe Conjectures which are made at random without any ground; and all thoſe Deductions grounded upon ſimple Conjectures are either uncertain or frivolous. And this I conceiv'd obſervable upon the

points

points of *Transitions*, *Circumstances*, and *Motives*, wherein the principal artifice of *Narration* consists. Take now what is to be thought of its parts, which are the *Figures*, the *Passions*, the *Descriptions*, the *Orations*, the *Reflexions* or *Sentences*, the *Characters of persons*, the *Digressions*, and whatever may enter into the œconomy of the Discourse, whereof History ought to be compos'd.

XVI.

Figures.

HIstory does not make use of *Figures*, but onely to animate and enliven it self. The Orator who designs to impose, does speak for the most part figuratively, the better to set the Resforts of his Art on work: but the Historian ought to demean himself otherwise. That very Simplicity of Expression which Truth requires in History, is not compatible with those Figurative Airs, which would offend its candour and ingenuity. *Lucian*, who is admirable upon all other accounts, is not so much upon any, as against those vain Ornaments of Eloquence, which

do

do not become History. *If you bring in too many of them*, says he, *you make it like Hercules dress'd up in the ornaments of his mistress*: which is the greatest Extravagance imaginable. It is yet much less capable (adds he) of those glittering Flourishes which some use in Poesy, to cause those Emotions which it excites in the Heart, which stir the Soul, and raise a disturbance in the Mind by the agitation of the Passions. History, which is simple and natural, and would not have me believe any such thing, ought to leave me the freedom of my Heart, that I may pass a more solid judgment on what it tells me. Eloquence, which by its proper Character is a delusive art, may attempt upon my Liberty, by endeavouring to persuade me whether I will or no: But History, which confines it self within the limits of pure instruction, cannot with any *decorum* make use of Figures upon any other score, than that of devesting the Discourse of its natural frigidity, and making it less wearisom. 'Tis onely thus that *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon* keep the Readers Mind vigilant; nor is it ever to impose upon the publick, that *Salust*, *Livy*, and *Mariana* speak figuratively. *Tacitus* is not so scrupulous; he has the Air of a man, who designs onely to dazle: the boldness of his Metaphors, and of his other Fi-

Luc. de conscrib. hist.

Figures, renders his Expreſſion as if 'twere ſcrew'd up, and of difficult comprehenſion. *Ceſar* is in the other extreme; it is a naked Diſcourſe, without Figure, deſtitute of all ornament. Not but that a figurative Expreſſion ſeaſonably made, does ſometimes pleaſe more than the proper words, in regard it creates Images that are more lively and pleaſant to the Mind, and gives a vigour and generoſity to the Diſcourſe; and there is a wiſe and judicious confidence of Style, which is allowable in thoſe places, where there ſhould be an excitation of the Spirits. But it is requiſite, that the Figures to be well imployed ſhould affect Shamefac'dneſs and Modeſty, not aſſuming to themſelves the liberty of thoſe Sallies of Poeſy, or the nobler ſort of Eloquence. Let them not (ſays *Lucian*) be too ſplendid nor too far fetch'd, unleſs it be in the deſcription of a Battel, or in an Harangue, wherein the Hiſtorian (ſays he) may unfurle the Sails of his Eloquence, yet without ſpreading them too far.

Ceſar ſcripſit Commentarios qui nudi ſunt, abſque omni ornatu orationis. Cic. in Brut.

XVII.

XVII.

Passions.

THe *Passions* are also one of the great Beauties of Narration, when they are seasonably intermingled, and judiciously treated therein. Nor do they indeed require that heat which ought to attend them upon the Theatre: they ought to appear in another Air, for they are not represented by way of action, but onely related. An Historian may give his Discourse a dress of Passion, but he ought not to be in any himself. Thus does he study Man with all possible disquisition, to discover in his heart the most secret Motions which Passion is capable of exciting therein, to the end he may express the trouble and discomposure of it. This partly and pathetically done, is a great divertisement in a Narration. *Thucydides* has treated that part better than *Herodotus*, for he is more eloquent and more pathetical, according to the Sentiment of *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*; though *Herodotus* does sometimes betray a greater vivacity. *Hermogenes* propo-

Epist. ad Pomp. & de virt. Serm.

ſes an admirable Model of a tender, affectionate Narration, in the death of *Penthea*, Queen of *Suſiana*, which is related in the ſeventh Book of *Xenophon's Cyrus*. 'Tis one of the moſt excellent paſſages of that Author; all is related therein with a great tenderneſs and inſinuation. *Quintilian* pretends, that of all the Hiſtorians *Livy* has moſt ſignallized himſelf, by thoſe tender and delicate ways of Expreſſion, wherein he has treated of the gentleſt Motions of the Soul; the violent carrying away of the *Sabine* Virgins, thoſe Tenderneſſes which they made appear to diſarm the *Romans* their Husbands, and the *Sabines* who were their Fathers; the death of *Lucretia*, and her body expos'd to the publick, to ſtir up the people to a Revolt from the *Tarquins*; *Vetturia* at the feet of her Son *Coriolanus*, who was come to beſiege *Rome*, to appeaſe him; *Virginia* ſtabb'd with a Dagger by her own Father; the Conſternation of *Rome* after the Battel at *Canna*; and a thouſand other paſſages of that kind, ſet down in his Hiſtory with the moſt delicate Airs, and the moſt pathetical Expreſſions that can be imagin'd, are excellent Examples of it. And it is in this Hiſtorian that a man ought to ſtudy the Air of treating the Paſſions, as they ought to be treated in Hiſtory; for he animates himſelf onely in thoſe places, where there is a

Affectus eos præcipuè qui dulciores ſunt, nemo hiſtoricorum Livio magis commendavit. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

neceſſity of heat and fervour. *Tacitus* minds not the husbanding of his fire; he is always animated; nay the Colours he makes uſe of are always too ſtrong: and in regard he is many times too expreſſive in certain things, and does not make a natural Repreſentation, he moves not the Reader. I ſay nothing of the other Hiſtorians, moſt of whom underſtood not the Paſſions, nor the manner they ought to be treated. 'Tis a ſingular kind of Rhetorick, which requires a great Senſefulneſs, and a very exact knowledge of Moral Philoſophy. But if we would pleaſe, let us be ſure to avoid thoſe dry Narrations, which do not excite any tenderneſs by thoſe paſſionate Airs which Nature requires.

XVIII.

Deſcriptions.

THe Affectation which moſt Hiſtorians ſeem to have for *Deſcriptions*, has ſomewhat decry'd the uſe of them amongſt the Judicious: nor is there any thing ſo childiſh as an over-gawdy Deſcription in a ſerious Hiſtory. An Author cannot be too circumſpect in the uſe which ought to be made of them. The Principle which ought to be therein obſerv'd is, that there's no more requiſite than what is neceſſary, to create a clearer apprehenſion of the things, the knowledge whereof is eſſential to that which a man writes. Such is the Deſcription of the Iſland of *Capreæ* in the fourth Book of *Tacitus* his Annals; for it ſpecifies the Reaſons which *Tiberius* had to retire thither, towards the end of his days, which makes it neceſſary: and being ſhort, elegant, polite, as it is, having nothing ſuperfluous, it may be ſaid, that it is as it ſhould be. The deſcription of the place where *Jugurtha* was defeated by *Metellus* in *Saluſt*, contributes to the better

Salin bel. Jugurth.

con-

comprehenſion of the Fight. We find there an account of the Gallantry of the *Romans*, as alſo of the Experience of the King of *Numidia*, by the advantage he had taken in poſting himſelf in the upper Grounds; and the whole Relation of the Battel is better underſtood by that Repreſentation of the place, which the Hiſtorian ſets before our eys: as he does alſo the Deſcription of the place where *Hannibal* attacqued *Minutius*, in the 22. Book of *Livy*'s Annals, which is a paſſage very well couch'd. Deſcriptions may alſo be allow'd in a great Hiſtory to render the Narration more divertive, provided they be to the purpoſe, and without that ſuperfluity wherewith they are ordinarily attended in young Hiſtorians: the affectation they have to make an Oſtentation of their Abilities that way, occaſioning ſometimes their falling into Childiſhneſs, which are to be pitied. Nay, *Lucian* quarrels at the over-tedeous Deſcription which *Thucydides* makes of the Plague of *Athens*, in the ſecond Book of his Hiſtory; and it is poſſible he may have ſome Reaſon for it; for that Author (as wiſe as he is) gives too minute a Particularization of that Diſtemper. But it is with much more ground that the ſame Critick exclaims againſt the impertinent Hiſtorian of his time, who took ſo great a pleaſure in making great Deſcrip- De hiſt. conſcrib.

tions of Mountains, Cities, Battels, which *as to their Frigidity surpass'd all the Snow and Ice of the North.* Nor indeed is there any thing so frigid, as a Description too far-fetch'd. The Military Machines of *Cæsar* are describ'd in his *Commentaries* with too great a particularity of Circumstances, in a subject so mechanick as that is. It would seem that great Commander, whose Reputation in the management of Military Affairs is well established, had a desire also of acquiring that of an excellent Engineer; wherein there appears too great an Air of Affectation, in a person so judicious as he was. The Description of *Africk* in *Salust's Jugurthine* War, is over-circumstanced; there needed not so much to have been said, to set out the Limits of the Kingdoms of *Adherbal*, and *Jugurtha*, which was the business then in hand. What occasion was there of describing that whole Countrey, and distinguishing the Manners of the Inhabitants, with so much particularity? It is requisite therefore that Descriptions should be necessary, exact, succinct, elegant, not sought for, and that they have not any thing that clashes, nor that there be discover'd a vain desire in the Author of making a greater shew of his Wit than of his Subject; that so they may be such as they ought to be, and such as those of *Livy*, who

is to be the Model, which they are to propose to themselves, who would make them well.

XIX.

Harangues.

I Find the Sentiments of our Masters much differing as to this point. *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, *Salust*, have principally signallized themselves by their *Harangues*. *Thucydides* has therein excelled the rest: the Discourses which he makes the principal Actors of his History deliver, as *Pericles*, *Nicias*, *Alcibiades*, *Archidamus*, and whole Nations, whom he introduces speaking by their Deputies, are admirable Lectures for the Orators of all Ages; and it is principally in that School that *Demosthenes* had his Institution. *Polybius* is more reserved; he does not make *Scipio* speak so much, though he might justly have done it, as having always accompanied him in his Wars. *Cæsar* is yet

In sermonibus effingendis Herodotum, Thucydidem, Xenophontem, Sallustium, nihil videntur: ea causa est cur Cæsar Commentarios scripsit, ut id omitteret, in quo alii laborarunt. Biscioli l. 7. hor. subcæs.

more

more reſerv'd, for he does not in a manner make any of thoſe Harangues, pretending they derogate from the truth of Hiſtory; and making it his buſineſs onely to write plain Memoirs, that ſo he might be the more ſimple in his Diſcourſe. *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* brings in *Brutus* making a great Exhortation upon the death of *Lucretia*, to animate the people to revenge: and the Harangue he introduces *Valerius* making upon the Form of Government, which was moſt convenient for the State, in the ſeventh Book of his Hiſtory, is of a great length. *Joſephus*, *Appianus*, *Dion Caſſius*, *Procopius*, are great Diſcourſers, as were alſo *Thucydides* and *Xenophon*, who had taken that *Idea* of Haranguing from *Homer*. And indeed if we examine the ground of thoſe Diſcourſes, eſpecially of thoſe which are made by chief Commanders, to encourage their Souldiers to fight, we ſhall find but little likelyhood in them. *Trogus* with much reaſon reproaches *Saluſt* and *Livy*, with the immoderate exceſs of Harangues in their Hiſtories. Accordingly all thoſe Diſcourſes made by Grandees have an Air of

Trogus reprehendit in Livio & Saluſtio, quòd conciones & orationes operi ſuo inſerendo, hiſtoriæ modum exceſſerint. Juſtin. l. 38.

Livium, Thucydides, interſerunt conciones, quæ nunquam ab iis, quibus ſunt attributæ, cognitæ fuerunt. Scal. Poet. l. 1.

Fi-

Fiction: for upon what Memoirs could they have been taken? Beſides that, it is not likely a Warriour ſhould ſpeak as an accompliſh'd Orator. So when *Pericles* in *Thucydides* commends thoſe Souldiers who had been defeated and killed by the *Bœotians*, his Harangue is ſuppoſititious; as is alſo that which *Saluſt* makes *Catiline* ſpeak to the Conſpirators, which in all probability was ſecret, and not much thought of before hand. And this is ſome part of *Beny*'s Argument in his diſapproval of that Abuſe. *Thucydides*, who was a judicious Author, grew ſenſible of it in his laſt Books, wherein he Harangues much leſs than in the precedent. But it is a Leſſon of Nature; for there is no account made thereof, if they who are concerned therein are not introduc'd to ſpeak them; for there is not any thing elſe does ſo much animate the Narration, which is apt to become frigid by too even a thread of Diſcourſe. There is therefore a mean or temperament to be obſerved: A ſhort Diſcourſe pertinently made in an Hiſtory, by an Author fit to make ſuch a one, and ſuch as may be conveniently applicable to the perſon and the ſubject then concerned, may have its peculiar beauty, being ſet in its proper place. But thoſe formal Harangues at the head of an Army, when they are juſt ready to engage, and thoſe tireſom and prolix

Ben. l. 2. de hiſt.

lix Deliberations, which are made upon the Affairs whereof they ſpeak, are now in a manner obſolete and out of uſe in well-digeſted Hiſtories; and the wiſeſt Authors chuſe rather to introduce the perſons concern'd ſpeaking indirectly, and ſaying the things in general, without engaging themſelves to ſpeak the very words, as *Livy* has done at the beginning of his Hiſtory, by the Embaſſadors whom *Romulus* ſends to his Neighbours. Moſt of the Harangues in *Saluſt* are always admirable, and never pertinent nor to the purpoſe. For nothing can be more excellent than the Diſcourſe of *Marius*; it is a moſt ſolid piece of Morality upon the ſubject of Gallantry: all is rational in it, and Antiquity has but few Diſcourſes of that vigour in order to the perſuaſion of Vertue; but that is not in its proper place. And the Air wherewith he makes *Cato* and *Caſar* give their Votes in the Senate, is not (as great as it is) proportionate to the reſt of the Hiſtory. For the ſame reaſon the great Diſcourſe which *Dion Caſſius* makes in the 56. Book of his Hiſtory, upon the Commendation of Marriage and Celebacy, is not very pertinent. There is not any thing comparable to the Harangue which *Tacitus* brings in *Tiberius* making in the Senate, upon the Reformation of Luxury and Riot, in the third

Book

Book of his Annals: never did Historian make a Prince speak with more Dignity. The Harangues of *Agrippa* and *Mecænas* to *Augustus*, the one advising him to quit the Empire, and the other to keep it, are admirable in *Dion Cassius*; but they are so long, that they take up the whole 52. Book. In a word, to put a period to this Article, I am of *Cicero*'s Opinion, who speaking of the Discourses of *Thucydides*, wisely says, *I find them very excellent; but I could not do as much my self if I would, nor would I do it if I could.* And this is the best that can be said as to that point: for in fine, Harangues are always subject to be tedeous. And 'tis a pleasant humour of *Boccalini*, who makes an ancient man to be condemn'd, by way of Penance, to read one of *Guicciardine*'s Harangues, because he had read a Madrigal in the *Parnassus* with his Spectacles on.

De Thucydide orationes, quas interposuit, laudare soleo; sed imitari neq; possim si velim, neq; velim si possim. Cic. de clar. Orat.

XX.

XX.

The Characters of Perſons.

Pourtraitures do very much imbelliſh an Hiſtory, when they are well done: but the *Romances* have ſpoil'd us upon that ſcore; for we make too many of them, and ſuch as are not like any thing. We amuſe our ſelves in repreſenting at random the external Accompliſhments of the perſon, which is not the buſineſs to be done. Of what concern is it to me, to know whether *Hannibal* had a fair Sett of Teeth, provided his Hiſtorian diſcover to me the Grandeur of his *Genius*, provided he give me the Repreſentation of a bold reſtleſs Spirit, of a Perſon of vaſt Projects, of an undaunted Courage, and all that animated by an uncontrollable Ambition, but kept up by a robuſt Conſtitution, as *Livy* has deſcrib'd him? Thus does *Saluſt* create in me a great Opinion of *Catiline*, by the Pourtraiture he makes of him at the entrance of his Hiſtory. And when I ſee that reſolute Souldier raiſing Armies in his Cloſet, going to the Senat in a ſilence, which denotes Reſolution,

Explicentur hominum ipſorum non ſolùm res geſtæ, ſed vita ac natura. Cic. l. 2. de Orat.

Lib. 21.

lution, to affront the Conſul, ſlighting and ſcorning his Invectives, putting *Rome* into an Alarm, making *Italy* tremble; in fine, daring that which no private perſon ever durſt; I am not ſurpriz'd, after the Deſcription which the Hiſtorian has given me of him. I ſee a man of capacity and conduct, who ſtirs all without ſhewing himſelf, becauſe he had laid his deſign well. *Pompey* is at a great diſtance with the beſt Forces of the Commonwealth, engag'd in an important but obſtinate War; *Rome* is full of diſaffected perſons; the neighbouring Provinces are full of Malecontents; there is an univerſal diſorder in the Commonwealth, by reaſon of the overflux of all vices predominant therein; and all things ſeem favourable to *Catiline*'s deſign, in the conjuncture he takes for the execution of it. Thus may a man gueſs at what will happen upon the War between *Adherbal* and *Jugurth*, after the deſcription which *Saluſt* gives of both their *Genius's:* thus have I a perfect knowledge of *Scylla* and *Marius*, according to the *Idea* he has given me of them; and take a pleaſure to ſee flowing down from a ſource, which that Hiſtorian has diſcovered to me, the reſult of the great Actions of *Jugurth*, who gave ſo much trouble to the *Romans*, after the Repreſentation he has made me of that Chieftain's courage and conduct.

duct. 'Twas thus the Ancients intermingled in their Hiſtories ſuch Pourtraitures of perſons, whom they would give a particular Character of, to diſtinguiſh them from others; which is a thing of great Ornament in a Work, when 'tis pertinently done. For when the Hiſtorian has well eſtabliſh'd a Character by thoſe eſſential and diſtinctive lines, all goes the better; every thing is more eaſily apprehended in the Narration. But it is a Maſter-piece for a man to attain that reſemblance, which conſiſts onely in thoſe ſingular and imperceptible Touches, by which alone Nature is expreſs'd, and which are hardly found, otherwiſe than by a particular ſearch into mens hearts, and a diſcovery of all the Receſſes thereof, to get a perfect knowledge of what lies conceal'd. But what vivacity of Spirit, and what perſpicacity is there not requiſite to do that? Take here then what is to be obſerved therein: The Pourtraiture or Character ought to be real; and ſo *Xenophon* is defective in the Pourtraiture he has made of *Cyrus*, wherein he has given us a *Hero* in *Idea*. It ought to reſemble the perſon repreſented; in which caſe *Tacitus* is not exact, who makes it his buſineſs rather to follow his own *genius*, than to imitate Nature; endeavouring rather to make beautiful pieces, than good draughts; provided his re-

pre-

presentations please, as that of *Sejanus*; in the fourth of his Annals, he minds not how little they resemble, for he makes him more wicked than he was, if we may believe *Paterculus*, who much commends him. There ought not to be any Pourtraitures made but of the most important persons; as to which particular *Salust* is mistaken in the Pourtraiture of *Sempronia*, who comes but indirectly into *Catiline*'s Conspiracy. But though a man ought not to amuse himself too much in describing the external qualifications of the person, yet may it be done upon certain occasions, when it is conducive to a better discovery of the *genius* of those who are spoken of. And indeed there are many ways of representing persons. *Livy* speaking of *Lucretia*, who was so beautiful in the eye of her Husband, giving no description of her Countenance, gives an account onely of her Vertue, and in two words sets down the greatest *Idea* which could be given a vertuous Woman. *Taictus* describes *Tiberius* onely by his Actions; and 'tis by those that he makes a discovery of him. *Lampridius* *Lucretiam nocte serâ non in convivio luxúque, sed deditam Ianæ inter ancillas sedentem inveniunt.* Annal. l. 1.

Oppressit in triclinio parasitos suos violis & floribus, sic ut animam aliqui efflaverint. Lampr. in Heliog.

gives us a description of the fantastick humour of the Emperour *Heliogabalus*, when he tells us, that, after he had glutted his Parasites with good cheer, he caus'd them to be smother'd in great heaps of Flowers. *Procopius* describes the Empress *Theodora* by her Venereal Debauches. The Historian of *Wenceslaus* thinks it enough to pitch upon one debauch'd act to give a Pourtraiture of that Emperour: *He order'd* (says he) *his Cook to be spitted and roasted, because he had not roasted a Pig, which he intended to eat of, to his mind.* But the best way of describing is that of discovering the secret motions and inclinations of the Heart, from which we may derive a better knowledge of the person; 'tis thence alone we ought to assume that Air which distinguishes, to give a man a Character built upon the ground-work whence it is taken. All the rest ought to be but of little account in a serious History, which cannot admit of any thing but what is judicious. Nor do I like those copied Pourtraitures, made up of an intermixture of several pieces, such as *Mariana* has, which he has taken out of *Tacitus*; nor such as that of *Walstein* in *Sarrazin*, which is compos'd of most of the excellent Pourtraitures of Antiquity. A man ought not to amuse himself in taking of Copies when he draws by the

Life,

Life, and thinks to make an Original. In fine, History is the most faithful representation of the persons of whom it speaks; for nothing makes a greater discovery of their Character, than the Consequences of their Actions.

XXI.

Reflections and Sentences.

THis Article will much exercise our Discursive Faculty, as being that which makes the whole Delicacy of History, when it is treated with that tenderness which that Subject requires. But what deviations and mistakes are there not to be avoided, in a track wherein a man cannot walk too simply? *Xenophon*, *Polybius*, and *Tacitus* are very liberal in points of *Reflections*. *Thucydides*, *Sallust*, and *Cæsar* are more reserv'd. What side should we take amidst so great Examples, upon so different a conduct, and in a matter so important? Certain it is, that what beauty soever History may expect from these sorts of Ornaments, there is not any thing relating thereto, that ought to be better or more cautiously manag'd. For in a word, to moralize upon all things, and without any discern-

ment to put the Adventures which present themselves, great and little into curious and political Reflections, implies a quitting of the Character of an Historian, who ought simply to relate what he has to say, without shuffling into the Relation what comes into his own Head. Nor is there any thing more capable of altering the Truth, or at least of entangling it, than those subtile Conceptions which an Author thrusts in of his own, and which the Reader has not the ingenuity to unravel, from that part which is purely historical. It is therefore wisdom in an Author, not to be ridiculously over-conceited of his own sence, that so he may act the part of a Philosopher indifferently, upon whatever presents it self to him; as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, who plays the Philosopher too much, out of a mis-understood Affectation to appear Learned. *Livy* keeps on his way, without stopping at any thing; he says what he knows upon the things he speaks of, and he lewes the Reader to make Reflections himself, and does not prepossess him with his own; and when he does so, 'tis in few words, but noble and great ones; as for instance, what he says of the Crime and Punishment of *Appius*, who had forcibly carried away *Virginia*. It is a great talent in an Author, to know how to find work for those who read him, by gi-

Deos esse non negligere humana; superbiæ & crudelitati, et si seras, non leves pœnas venire. Annal. l. 3.

giving them matter, that they may deduce Consequences from it, and take those Prospects to the things he relates, which they shall think fit. For every Reader would have the freedom of think what he pleases upon what is presented to him, and not be prepossessed; and the use of that freedom is one of the greatest divertisements he takes in his reading. Let us therefore retrench those profound and abstracted Reflections, if our design be to please; let us not subtilize so much in what we write, but let us endeavour to be simple and natural. Let us speak the truth without commenting upon it, if we have the stoutness and strength of ingenuity to do it. Let us above all things avoid those usual Moralizations upon Fortune and her inconstancy, whereof some Books are so full. Let us not involve our selves in those over-sententious Sayings, which aim onely at splendour and decoration. Let us renounce those Clinchings, and all those delusive Sentiments, which some Authors of mean parts exercise upon words. But if we make an intermixture of Reflections in our Discourse, let them be naturally deducible from the ground of the Subject; let them not be too subtile or over-studied; let them have less Splendour than Solidity; let them come nearer the ratiocination of a wise Politician, than

Curandum ne sententiæ emineant extra corpus orationis expressæ. Petr.

this the affectation of a Declamator, let them not be either too frequent, and without an apparent connection, but enchas'd, or interwoven in some manner in the body of the Work. In fine, let them not have that forc'd Air of Reflections, which creates an ill Opinion of him who makes them. As to this particular *Tacitus*, *Machiavel*, *Paulus Jovius*, *D'Avila*, and most of the *Italians* and *Spaniards*, are excellent. Besides, let not any one amuse himself in making those curious Reflections, whether upon a political or moral account, unless he have a perfect knowledge of the person he speaks of, as also of the bent of his mind, and the Weaknesses of his heart; for it is by that knowledge that good Historians are distinguished from mean ones, as *Plutarch* in his Lives. *Salust*, as great an Endeavourer of Simplicity as he is, amuses himself too much in declaring against the corruption and immorality of his time; he is always incens'd against his Country, and always disgusted with the Government; he creates too bad an Opinion of the Commonwealth, by his Invectives and Reflections upon the Luxury of *Rome*. And indeed, though there be not any thing of falshood in what he says, yet he deviates from the Spirit which first animated him. Nor would *Livy* be so much a Declamator, if he did not sometimes

times forget that he is only an Historian. It is also requisite that a man should be deeply skilled in Morality, e're he can make pertinent and seasonable Reflections; for true Morality is the Ground-work of good Policy. And so it may be said, that *Tacitus* his Politicks are many times false, because his Morality is not true; wherein he attributes too great a Corruption to men, or he has not sufficiently that talent of simplicity he ought to have: there is not ordinarily any thing natural in his Reflections, because there is not any thing innocent; he envenoms all, and gives all things the worst Gloss that may be. By those ways he has corrupted the Minds of many persons, who imitate him in this particular, not being able to do it in others. And this is what I conceive observable as to the use of *Reflections* upon the score of History. A sentencious saying may be reasonably put into the mouth of a person, whose Character qualifies him for the speaking of Sentences. In my judgment *Mariana* and *Strada* have not been sufficiently careful in this particular. Nor is there any kindness to be had for that over-serious sort of Writers, who will not be put out of their track; and who to give an Air of greater importance to what they say, multiply Sentences upon Sentences, Reflections upon Reflections, and

by a ridiculous Gravity play the Cato upon trifles. An excessive humour of subtilizing in these over-fought Conjectures, is apt to degenerate into a delusive delicacy of writing; and Reflections are not good but when they have least the Air of Reflection.

XXII.

Digressions.

Digressions have also their peculiar grace, when they are made where they ought to be, and not chargable with any indetermination or want of connection, inasmuch as they give the Narration that variety which is requisite to render it divertive; but there ought to be a prudent distribution and intermixture of them. A man is apt to be mised when he leaves his Subject; for wanting the requisite recollection, he is apt to take the wrong course; and for a man to quit the matter he had propos'd to himself, without any Precaution, and so to go and seek out Adventures, onely to give his Reader a more spacious prospect, does not so well stand with the Character of an Historian, as it

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does with that of an Adventurer, who minds every thing, purposely to thrust into his Narrative whatever comes in his way; he takes Cities, gives Battels, and makes Adventures every where; as *Herodotus* does, who is continually starting out of his matter by over-frequent Digressions, and those many times forc'd, though he had taken *Homer* for his Patern, who is a great Master in it; for though he often takes a high soaring flight, yet he pursues his course directly enough to his mark, without deviating by introducing things that are incongruous. *Thucydides* is more regular than *Herodotus*; he keeps close to his Subject, without starting out of it. The Conspiracy of *Harmodius* and *Aristogiton*, in the sixth Book, is one of those Digressions wherein he has most excell'd. *Xenophon* endeavours to imitate him; if he sometimes miscarries, as he does in the fifth Book of the History of *Cyrus*, in the Adventure of *Panthea*, yet that Adventure has a natural connection with the body of his History; *Panthea* having been taken by *Cyrus* in the Defeat of the *Assyrians*, and King *Abradatas* her Husband having engag'd himself in the Party of *Cyrus*, and been made one of the Generals of his Army. True it is, that I would not be answerable for the other Digressions of that Author, which have not that

absolute connection to the Subject they ought to have in his other Works. *Polybius* has frequent Digressions upon the point of Politicks, the Science of Military Affairs, and the Laws of History, which seem not very necessary. *Salust* is sometimes chargeable with the same fault; upon which score a modern Critick blames them both. *Phædrus* does very much commend the Digression which *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* makes in his seventh Book, in describing the Consequences of *Aristomedes* his Tyranny. The Question about the *Phœnix* handled in the sixth Book of *Tacitus* his Annals, upon occasion of the News which was brought to *Rome* of a *Phœnix* that appear'd in *Egypt*, in the Reign of *Tiberius*, is within the rules of a just Digression. The Question is search'd into by the different Opinions of Naturalists upon the Bird; its Qualities, its Figure, all is there describ'd in few words. A Flourish of that nature well plac'd is of great Ornament in a Narration, and it excites the Curiosity of the Reader, and keeps his Mind vigilant and attentive. Nor is there any thing gives the History of *Mariana* that Air of Grandeur which it has, so much as the Art which that Author has of introducing into it, by the means of Digression, whatever passes in the World that's considerable, whatever is

Polybius & Salustius ita peccârunt, ut nullam unquam veniam impetrârint, dum digrediuntur, &c. Ex Sebast. Mac.

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admirable in fabulous times, and whatever is remarkable in *Greece*, *Sicily*, and the *Roman* Empire. There you have a very particular account of the Republick of *Carthage*, which it will be hard to find better couch'd any where else: as also of the Sieges of *Saguntum* and *Numantia*, of *Hannibal*'s Passage into *Italy*, the *series* of the Emperours, the first setting up of Christianity, the Preaching of the Gospel, the Conquests of the *Arabians*, and several other Imbellishments which are of the sublime Character. 'Tis a *genius* ever minding transcendent matters, which yet have a constant dependence by something to the History of *Spain*. No Historian ever honour'd his Countrey by any Work so much as he has done, for he makes whatever was transacted of any great account in the world contributory to the Honour of his own Countrey. But as there are few Authors who have that vigour of *genius*, as to follow the thread of a History with the same breath, and to keep themselves close to the same Subject, without starting from it; so are there but few Historians, who do not sometimes forget themselves by being overseen in their Digressions. I shall not trouble my self to observe them, they are obvious: for nothing is more rare than that exactness of sanceful Connection, which knows how to

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keep close to its Subject. This I shall only affirm, that *Livy* has not more carefully avoided any thing, than those Deviations which diverted him from his matter in hand, as he declares himself; in regard that nothing does so much betray a want of Judgment. But we might find even at this day in some of our Historians, that ridiculous humour which *Lucian* censur'd in those, who in his time writing the Wars of the *Parthians*, shuffled into their Narrations the fondest and the most extravagant Imaginations in the world, onely to make them the more divertive, making their Excursions out of Country into Country, out of Ages into Ages, out of Adventures into Adventures, without any discernment. It ought therefore to be laid down as a certain Rule, and such as is not to be dispenc'd withall; That Digressions ought always to have a Connexion by something to the principal Subject that is treated of; as it has always been observed by that Judicious Historian we mentioned before: and it must be strictly examined, whether there be not at the bottom some natural incompatibility between them and it; otherwise they are no way proper thereto, for nothing is more essential to Digression, than the Rapport which it ought to have to the Subject, and the great mystery is, that a man precisely know how far it ought to be extended,

Nihil minùs quæstum à principio hujus operis, quàm ut plus justo ab rerum ordine declinarem, variationibúsque distinguendo opera, legentibus veluti diverticula quærerem. Lib. 9. Annal.

Luc. de conscrib. hist.

tended, for it has its natural Boundaries, which must not be exceeded. And what makes this measure the more difficult is this, that the extent which must be given it ought not to be always the same; for it ought to be great or little, proportionably to the greater or lesser Connection it has to the principal part of the History; and this very Discernment is the Rock upon which most Historians are cast. For there are not any, who in the Digressions wherein they engage themselves, do not exceed the Limits they should have observ'd, by reason of the difficulty there is in the exact and regulated Observance thereof. And in this particular we may be somewhat censorious upon *Mariana*, who in the beginning of his History has taken great compasses and windings, in order to the carrying on of his main design: as to this he stands in some need of Apology, and I cannot undertake his Vindication. The onely Model to be propos'd as to this point is *Livy*, who makes no deviation out of the *Roman* History, so much as to deliver his Sentiment upon the Success of *Alexander*'s Arms, in case he should have come into *Italy*, without taking great Precautions, and without preengaging mens minds by very elaborate Excuses. The discourse he makes upon that consideration is very curious, and very pertinently apply'd.

Ut quæram libeat qui eventus Romanis rebus, si cum Alexandro foret bellatum, futurus fuerit. Annal. l. 9.

XXIII.

XXIII.

The Eloquence proper to History.

History ought to be eloquent, that so it may not be wearisom, and in this ought its Art principally to consist; and this is its ordinary effect. But there is also an extraordinary one known to very few persons, to wit, that of not speaking ought that is true, but what has withall the Air of truth, that it may merit Credibility, in the things that are more difficultly credible. The Eloquence which knows how to give things the right prospect they ought to have, is particularly applicable in this case, and the accurate distribution of matters in that admirable order and compagination, which gives them verisimilitude, is its principal work. The Historian has his matter given him by the Memoirs wherewith he is supply'd, but the distribution of it is his peculiar province; and to manage that as it ought to be, he should not so much reflect on what he says, as on the manner how he says it; for in this as well as in the other parts of Eloquence, the manner

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is all in all. And this is properly the use which the Historian ought to make of Eloquence, which alone disposes every thing into its proper place, that it may there have its effect. This is the great artifice of *Thucydides*, who (as *Cicero* affirms) surpass'd all the other Historians by his Eloquence. *Quintilian* does not speak of that of *Livy*, but with admiration. And it is indeed by that admirable quality that those two great men have so highly distinguished themselves from the common rank of other Historians: for it is Eloquence that gives a man the talent of expressing himself. He who most clearly expresses himself is most persuasive, and it is onely persuasion that imprints on things that tincture of Truth, which they have not but by deriving it from the Air that is given them, and from the position and prospect wherein they are plac'd. Accordingly there cannot be any thing more eloquent than the Description which *Sallust* makes of the State *Rome* was in, when *Catiline* design'd to become the Master of it. And when that admirable Author represents the Commonwealth corrupted by Luxury and Avarice, weakned by the weight of its own Grandeur, you have the expressions of the most exquisite Eloquence that is to be found in History. It is in those draughts and representations that

Thucydides omnes dicendi artificio vincit. Cic. de Orat. l. 2.

Tito Livio mira facundia viro. Fab. l. 8. c. 1.

Livium supra quam dici potest eloquentem. Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

Livius eloquentiæ & fidei præclarus imprimis. Tacit. Annal. l. 4.

that Art ought to shew it self, when a man is Master of it: and the Historians of the first rank are full of them. 'Tis this sort of Eloquence that ought to be interwoven with History, that it may be animated by its fire and spirit; for without that every thing languishes. And those different Dresses which ought to be given to the Narration, to render it delightful; all that artifice of *Transitions*, those so delicate and so passionate sallies, which smite the Reader's tenderest part; that intertexture and compagination of the most memorable Matters of Fact, that regular distribution of Circumstances, and all those conspicuous passages which excite Admiration, are onely the effects of that singular sort of Eloquence which is proper to History, and ought sometimes to take a loaring flight when occasion requires. But it must be the discerning Perspicacity of the Historian, that shall distinguish those passages. There reigned amongst the *Greeks*, and indeed amongst the *Romans*, a kind of Eloquence in the Harangues of the persons whom they introduc'd speaking, which proceeded from pure Ostentation, and made a greater shew of the Historians Ingenuity than of the Truth of the History, and where in they made it not so much their business to instruct, as to dazle and amuse the Reader.

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That Eloquence is grown obſolete amongſt thoſe of the Moderns, who are of ſoundeſt Judgment, becauſe it had a certain Air of Affectation, and that ſuch as are able to diſcern do fancy onely what is natural. The Prefaces of *Saluſt*, which are large Diſcourſes well-couch'd, inſtructive, and very eloquent, ſeem to me to be of that kind, as being a ſort of Common-places that have no Rapport to the Hiſtory. Poſſibly that Author had ſome Pieces in ſtore, which he made uſe of as occaſion required; as *Cicero* did, according to his own acknowledgment; *I have* (ſays he) *a Volum of Prefaces always ready for the occaſions I may have of them.* I ſhould never have ſuſpected *Cicero* guilty of that foreſight, had he not bragg'd of it himſelf. It might do well in an Orator, who many times ſpeaks in publick, and has not always the leiſure to prepare himſelf: but it is not to be allow'd in a Hiſtory, where a man is Maſter of himſelf and his time. For in ſhort, all thoſe Diſcourſes how plauſible ſoever they may be of themſelves, are no longer ſuch when they are out of their proper place, and as ſoon as they make any diſcovery of Affectation. And thus much as to the Eloquence of Hiſtory.

Saluſtius in bello Jugurthino & Catilinario, nihil ad hiſtoriam pertinentibus principiis uſus eſt. Fab. l. 10. c. 8.

Habeo volumen Proœmiorum; ex eo eligere ſoleo, cum aliquid ſcribere inſtitui. Ad Attic. l. 16. ep. 6.

XXIV.

Other Imbelliſhments which may be imploy'd in Hiſtory.

THere may be yet other Beauties and Embelliſhments fit to be us'd in the Structure of Hiſtory, in order to the making of it more cheerful and ſprightly, either when it is apt to languiſh, or when it is carried on with too even a thread, by long-winded Relations, which are not ſufficiently diverſified. But of ſuch Embelliſhments, thoſe which make the greateſt ſhew do not always produce the greateſt effect. There is always ſomewhat that's counterfeit in what is moſt glittering. A mind which is limited takes no pleaſure in too much luſtre; and that conſideration ought to oblige an accompliſh'd man ſo to husband thoſe Embelliſhments, as not to be prodigal of them, and to proportion himſelf to the capacity of man, whom exceſſive Light dazles; beſides that, when theſe Beauties are too frequent, they rather aſtoniſh than delight. There are ſome, which being not

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ſo obvious, give a greater ſatisfaction to the more delicate ſort of Readers, by whom they are obſerv'd, though they are not ſo by the ordinary. Men ſtill diſcover new Graces in them, which keep them up, and are of longer continuance than what makes a ſudden impreſſion, by its being too much expos'd to Apprehenſion. Theſe ſorts of Beauties do ſometimes conſiſt in certain ſudden turns of Eloquence or Wit, which have ſomewhat that's ſurprizing in them, and produce an unexpected effect in the paſſages wherein they are plac'd. Of which take theſe Examples.

Porſenna King of *Cluſium* beſieges *Rome*; *Caius Mutius* being much troubled at the danger his Country was in, by reaſon of ſo preſſing a Siege, goes over into *Porſenna*'s Camp, and kills his Secretary who ſtood by him, thinking he had kill'd the King himſelf. The Murtherer is ſeiz'd, and a Fire is prepar'd to make him diſcover his Accomplices. Upon which the undaunted young man held his hand in cold bloud over the live Coals, till it was quite burnt off, without any ſhrinking, and ſaid to the King, *See now how deſpicable Life is to thoſe, who look at great fame.* This Sentence ſpoken with an undaunted Spirit, changes the face of things: the Murtherer, who was before odious and deteſtable,

Sentit quam vile corpus ſit iis qui magnam gloriam vident. Tit. Liv. Ann. l. 2.

ble, raiſes an amazement in the minds of the Spectators. They look on him with a kind of reſpect, and he is ſent back with an Elogy, whom they were but juſt before ready to take off by exquiſite torments. 'Tis but a word that makes that change; and that word thus plac'd is of great Ornament in a Narration, and has a marvellous effect. Upon the taking of *Tarentum* by *Fabius*, *Hannibal*, though wholly defeated, had this excellent Saying, which ſtill argued a victorious mind, when in commending the Enemy, he took occaſion to commend himſelf alſo, *The Romans* (ſays he) *have alſo their Hannibal.* A bold demeanour in a perſon diſcomfited. And theſe Touches are frequent in that Hiſtorian. Nor is there any thing that raiſes a greater *Idea* of thoſe who are made to ſpeak thus, when they ſpeak well, nor yet of him who does make them ſpeak, when he does it pertinently.

Et Romani ſuum habent Annibalem. Anneal. l. 27.

Take yet another Inſtance of it out of *Tacitus*, in that famous Treat which *Meſſalina* made for her Gallant, in the very height of the Enjoyment, and the Debauches of that Entertainment, they ſent up to the top of a Tree a ſimple perſon named *Valens*, and one aſk'd him what he ſaw, *A Tempeſt* (ſaid he) *riſing in the air, and ſeeming to come from Oſtia.* That very word ſpoken by an inconſiderate per-

perſon, begat ſuch a penſiveneſs and perplexity in their minds, as occaſion'd a general diſturbance, though it had been ſaid without any deſign. For it prov'd a Prognoſtick of the Emperour's return, who arriv'd ſhortly after, and worried out with the infamous Deportments of the Empreſs, order'd her to be ſtabb'd. Theſe Touches having ſomewhat in them tending to prodigy, are ornamental in Hiſtory, as being by their ſmartneſs and picquancy apt to keep the mind in a continual poſture of Vigilance. There are a thouſand others, which the Hiſtorian may make uſe of, in order to the giving of his Work the greater ſprightlineſs, which I do not pretend to give a particular account of. 'Tis enough that I have hinted at what may give another face to Affairs, raiſe other Conjectures, and occaſion other *Idea's* and Sentiments. In ſhort, all thoſe delicate Touches, and ſuch as are capable of making a kind of Revolution in the mind of the Reader, and ſo to put it into motion and exerciſe, being always real Embelliſhments, are always appoſite and to the purpoſe. What is of greateſt importance is, that they be plac'd after ſuch a manner, as that they ſeem to be enchac'd in the Narration, there to have their deſign'd effect; that is to ſay, that they be conducive to give the ſubject matter a certain

Alacrity, when of it ſelf it becomes dry and unpleaſant.

XXV.

The Sentiments which ought to be conſpicuous and predominant in Hiſtory.

THere are ſome Sentiments which are fit for the Theatre, and are not ſo for Hiſtory; in regard that Poeſy ſpeaks things as they ought to be, and Hiſtory as they are. Accordingly thoſe Hiſtorians who give their *Hero's* ſuch exquiſite Sentiments, are not always the moſt judicious; and whatever is not grounded upon ſound Sence, how plauſible ſoever it may otherwiſe be, is not always the beſt. So that *Quintus Curtius* is not altogether in the right, when he repreſents *Alexander* as a perſon ſo admirable. He never makes him take the moſt prudent courſe that might be taken, but the moſt heroick and the moſt hazardous. He looks upon danger as what has ſomething of Charm in it;

and he does not so much love Conquests, as the Glory of Conquering. He may surprize *Darius* by attacquing him in the night-time, and by that means conceal his own weakness, the Enemy's Army being twice the number of his. But that great man, whose thoughts are less bent upon conquering, than upon having his Valour admir'd, engages the King of *Persia* in the day-time, resolv'd rather to perish gloriously, than to overcome by surprizes. *Darius* after his Defeat proffers to divide *Asia* with him, and propoles to him an Intermarriage with his Daughter; but *Alexander* would rather make his way to Fame through danger, than to gain preheminence with tranquillity. He hearkens not to those Propolals, and would not have any thing but what is extraordinary. 'Tis true, his Historian does him much honour, but in that great acquest of Glory is there not some defect in point of Verisimilitude? Does he not make his *Hero* more daring than prudent, and represent him rather as an hazardous Adventurer, than a person of great Ambition? No doubt he thought that the more plausible way, but he has thereby given us occasion to doubt whether it be a Romance or a History he hath left us; so far has he overshot himself as to that point. Of so great concern is it, that an Author keep close

in all things to Reaſon, which ought to regulate his Sentiments, and follow rather the nature of the things, than the charming *Idea's* of his own imagination. Let not Hiſtory therefore by any means countenance thoſe ridiculous projects for the acqueſt of an imaginary fame, which occaſion unſettled minds to commit ſo many miſcarriages, inaſmuch as moſt of them go but blindly in the purſuit of true honour, becauſe they know not what it is. Let it not inſpire a ſolid man with the Sentiments of a *Palladin* or Knight Errant, nor attribute the Vertues of a Romantick *Hero* to a true Courter of Honour. Great perſons are apt to frame to themſelves *Idea's* of Reputation according to their own Fancies, and anſwerably to the bent of their own Vanity. But the Publick Intereſt ought to be more dear to him who governs, than his own Fame; and the true Honour of a great Prince is, that he be lov'd rather than fear'd. Theſe are the Sentiments which ought to be moſt predominant in Hiſtory, that ſo it may be a Lecture of Clemency to Princes, and a Rule of Reaſon and ſound Inſtruction to all people. Let not the Hiſtorian therefore be miſtaken, let him in the firſt place be able to diſtinguiſh between true and counterfeit Honour in the Maxims of Life, that ſo he may not commend any thing but what is commend-

mendable. Let him undeceive people of their Errors, without becoming himſelf a Slave to popular Sentiments. Let him not ſuffer them to judge of things by their events, without reaſcending to the ſources, that he may acquaint them with the Principles thereof. Let him be careful to do juſtice to true and falſe merit, that ſo he may not impoſe any thing upon Poſterity, which is apt to credit what is ſaid without examining it, and to keep to the literal ſence of what it meets withall. Let him never make a diſcovery of great Emergencies, without ſome advertiſement of their Cauſes, and without laying open the ſecret Contrivances and Reſſorts by which they were compaſs'd. That many times is ſomething very inconſiderable; but men take a pleaſure to ſee great effects ariſing from ſmall principles, as *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* informs us in the fifth Book of his Hiſtory, upon occaſion of the Revolution of the Regal Government at *Rome*, caus'd by the inſolence of young *Tarquin*, and the haughty deportment of his Father. And this is the Spirit which ought to be predominant in Hiſtory, and theſe the Maxims which the Hiſtorian ought to obſerve. We come now to ſee what kind of *genius* he ought to have.

XXVI.

XXVI.

What Genius *the Hiſtorian ought to be of.*

IT is not to be imagin'd, that any thing conſiderable can be written in Hiſtory without a *Genius*, this is that which does all in all in this Art, as well as in the others: and it is onely by this that ſome Hiſtorians may be diſtinguiſh'd from others. A mean *Genius* ſhall make but a ſmall matter of a great Subject; and he who has a great *Genius* ſhall make great things of a ſmall ſubject. He therefore who would write Hiſtory well, ought to have an univerſal and comprehenſive Spirit, and ſuch as is capable of great *Idea's*, that he frame to himſelf a great Draught and Deſign of what he intends to do. Hiſtory (ſays *Cicero*) is a work of great importance,

Arduum videtur res geſtas ſcribere, quòd facta dictis exæquenda ſunt. Saluſt. Proœm. Bell. Catilin.

Magnum quid Hiſtoriam rectè ſcribere, & ſummi Oratoris proprium. De Orat. l. 2.

and

and not to be attempted but by a perſon above the common rate of men. And when *Lucian*, who was one of the greateſt Wits of his Age, which produc'd ſo many celebrated men, acknowledges that his *Genius* was too weak for Hiſtory, and not able to reach that Perfection which it requires, he puts me into ſome aſtoniſhment, and raiſes in me a very great *Idea* of the difficulty there is for a man to acquit himſelf well of that charge. For if that Author, who has not written any thing but what is admirable, and who gives Rules for the writing of Hiſtory, ſo ſenceful and inſtructive, ingeniouſly confeſſes, that he is not himſelf capable of ſupporting the weight of ſo great an undertaking, what are we to think of thoſe perſons who become Hiſtorians on a ſudden, without ever having any knowledge of what is eſſential to Hiſtory? As it happen'd (ſays he) in that War of *Armenia*, mention'd by him, which begat ſo many Authors, who out of a pure itch of writing would needs be dabbling upon that ſubject. That will not do the work, ſays he; for there is nothing more difficult than for a man to labour for Eternity, as *Thucydides* has done. For what vigour of Mind is there not requiſite to deliver the truth, without paraphraſing upon it, as they do, who have not their Souls great enough to obſerve the

Rules

Rules of a candid ſimplicity, and to relate things as they are? What unbyaſs'd Conſtancy is there not requiſite to unmask the Vice, which is naturally conceal'd in the artifices of Diſſimulation? What Penetration and Perſpicacity is there not neceſſary to diſcover the receſſes of their *Genius*, of whom a man is to ſpeak without amuſing himſelf about the external conſideration of their perſons, which does hardly ever ſignifie any thing? But when his work is to make a diſtinction between whole Nations and Ages, by what is eſſential in their Character, what ſteddineſs of Apprehenſion is there not requiſite? As for inſtance, in a relation of the Civil Wars of *Rome*, not to confound the Spirit and Humour of the Commonwealth, with that of Monarchy, the Independence of the one with the Dependence of the other; not to attribute in a Hiſtory of *France* the Manners of the Age of *Lewis* XIV, which is no way ſuperſtitious, to the Age of *Lewis* XI, whoſe Character was Superſtition it ſelf; not to make *Charlemaign* ſuch a one as *Henry* III, and to denote the times and perſons by what is particularly remarkable in their difference. What Principles of Equity ſhould not a man have for the exact Adminiſtration of Juſtice to Vice and Vertue, for the diſtinguiſhing of true and apparent Merit, and for a man's ac-

accuſtoming himſelf not to look on the Actions, without reflecting on the Perſons? What Judgment is there not needful for a man to pitch upon the right ſide in all things, to diſplay things in their beſt ſence, to be always tending to what is moſt ſolid; ſo to interpoſe his own Sentiment upon the matters of which he diſcourſes, as not to force the Reader by Prejudgments; not to deſcant upon the paſſages that ſeem delicate, but with that delicacy of Reflection, which cannot be the effect of any thing but an exquiſite ſence; not to charge his Diſcourſe with too much matter, ſuch as may ſmother the ſmartneſs of it, without allowing therein ſome place for what Reflection he might make himſelf, or giving his Reader a convenience to make any; to be able to find out the real Knot there may be in every Affair, without any danger of miſtaking, and ſo to clear the difficulty; not to make a recital of great Events upon frivolous motives; not to conceal falſe Conceptions of things under a pompous Expreſſion; to avoid what ſeems to have too ſtrong a Scent of Study, and whatever has a forc'd Air; and to follow in all things that Beam of Light and Intelligence, which gives an *Idea* of the diſcernment of the Hiſtorian, by raiſing a good opinion of his Capacity and Endowments? So that the

part

part most necessary to History is Judgment. The Orator may break forth into Sallies of Eloquence, such as are lively and florid, and run the hazard of taking those boldnesses, which may prove successful in a great Concourse of people, who are not taken with any thing so much as Confidence. The Poet may expatiate out of his subject, and not have his Wits always about him: But the Historian, who speaks in cold bloud, ought ever to be Master of himself, have the command of his thoughts, and not speak any thing but what is judicious. In short, there is not any thing requires so great a stock of Sencefulness, so much Reason, so great Wit, so much Judgment, and so many other qualities, as History, if written as it ought to be; and yet when all is done, a fortunate Disposition enrich'd with all these Accomplishments, must have one additional Perfection, to wit, that of a particular Conversation of the greatest persons. 'Twas by the familiar acquaintance which *Polybius* had with *Scipio* and *Lælius*, that he became so excellent an Historian. We have in *Thucydides* and *Livy* the accomplish'd Models which History requires; Antiquity has not any thing of greater perfection in that kind; and there is hardly any thing to be wished for in either of them, unless it be that *Thucydides* is yet more sincere than *Livy*,

vy, and *Livy* more natural than *Thucydides*. *Tacitus* is admirable in his way; *Lipſius* preſers him before all the reſt, but all are not of his Sentiment. It may be ſaid in the general, that he is an Hiſtorian of a particular Method by himſelf, who has great beauties, together with great defects; but his defects are ſomewhat ſhadowed under a Grandeur of *Genius*, which is conſpicuous in whatever he ſays; as alſo under ſomewhat of the ſublime Character, which exalts him above many Authors, who are more exact and more natural than he is. He has his Adherents and his Admirers. 'Tis true, he pleaſes thoſe who are talented with the imaginative part; but as to thoſe who are more for Judgment, and ſuch as affect Senceſulneſs rather than Embelliſhment or Eloquence, they are not ſo well ſatisfied with him.

Amongſt the Moderns I find *Mariana*, *D'avila*, and *Fra. Paolo*, of an admirable *genius* for Hiſtory. *Mariana* has the talent of reflecting and expreſſing excellently well what he thinks and has to ſay, and of giving a Character of Grandeur to what is tranſacted in his mind. *D'avila* does circumſtance things well, reaſons appoſitely enough upon the Subjects he treats of, and gives his Diſcourſe that evenneſs of thread and intertexture, from which it derives that inſinuating

Air,

Air, which is obſervable in him above the reſt. *Fra. Paolo*, in his Hiſtory of the Council of *Trent*, gives what colour and proſpect he pleaſes to what he ſays; never had any man that Art in a more eminent degree than he has. He alſo makes a diſcovery of a vaſt Capacity, in the talent he has of making profound Reſearches into the points of Doctrine whereof he treats, in order to give his Reader an exact account of them. Never did Author write with more artifice, or greater ſmartneſs of wit, nor yet with leſs reaſon and truth. He is a paſſionate Author, who imploys his Art in concealing his Paſſion. He would be pleaſant and drolliſh upon all occaſions, that he might not be thought angry and out of humour; but he falls by that means into another default. He is too much given to Raillery in a Subject ſo ſerious as that which he treats of; for Paſſion ſpreads it ſelf through all he ſays. And ſo that Hiſtorian, with all his great *genius*, is the moſt vicious Character that may be ſeen in the way of writing Hiſtory, wherein there is not any thing leſs pardonable than Animoſity. When an Hiſtorian has once the repute of being prepoſſeſs'd with ſome Paſſion, he is no longer believ'd. And this Reflection gives us occaſion to examine the Morality which is requiſite in him who makes it his buſineſs to write.

XXVII.

XXVII.

The Morality of the Historian.

WHereas every one frames to himself a Morality according to his *Genius*, there is a discovery made of the Spirit and Humor of an Historian by his Principles. This must in the first place be laid down as granted, that there are few of them so generously minded, as to be free from all Hope or Fear, and unconcernedly prefer Truth before their Interest, which later is the most universal Source of all the false Judgments which men make of the things whereof they take upon them to speak. This therefore ought to be the first thing that is taken into consideration, when a man makes it his profession to instruct the publick; and it is the first Maxim that an Historian ought to propose to himself. This being well established, his thoughts must be bent upon the gaining of Credibility in mens minds, and to give an Air of Truth to whatever he says. And to this principally ought all his Morality to be levell'd, and that the Historian will never do but by a solid Esta-

bliſhment of his Reputation: and it is not by Proteſtations of being ſincere that he ſhall give proofs of his ſincerity; but it is done by making a diſcovery in all his words of the ſteddineſs of his Heart, and the unbyaſſable Integrity of his Sentiments. Accordingly nothing ought to fall from him, but what bears the Character of Reaſon and Equity. The love he ought to have for Truth ſhould be the rule and ſtandard of all his Expreſſions, and all his *Idea's*. Let him always ſpeak as a juſt and vertuous man, and never let any thing ſlip from him which may be injurious to Modeſty and Integrity. Let him be ſevere and inflexible in the Sentiments which the moſt exact conſideration of Honour can inſpire him withall; and let there never appear any thing in his words which may occaſion any diſtruſt of his Candour and Ingenuous Deportment. Let it be believ'd that he ſpeaks what is true as ſoon as he ſpeaks it; that perſuaſion being grounded on the aſſurance men have that he is uncapable of impoſing. He can never do amiſs who has laid ſuch good Principles as theſe.

Nequa ſuſpicio gratiæ ſit, neq; ſimulatæ. Cic. de Orat.

'Tis by ſuch an unblemiſh'd Morality that *Thucydides* eſtabliſh'd the Reputation of his Sincerity in all ſubſequent Ages, and that he has gain'd the belief of all people. 'Tis by a love to Religion, and a reſpect for the Gods, which

which is conſpicuous in the Works of *Xenophon*, that whatever he ſays is credited; men being eaſily perſuaſible, that a man who has the love of Piety ſo deeply engraven in his heart, cannot utter a Falſhood. *Polybius* is more a Libertine; he treats as fabulous things the Sentiments which the people had of the Gods and of Hell, pretending quite to diſcredit them. And it is alſo by an unblameable Morality that *Livy* is more perſuaſive, than by his great Accompliſhments; nay through all the Intrigues, Intereſts, Paſſions, and other irregular proceedings of the men whom he decyphers, he lets you ſee a certain thread of Probity, which diſcovers him to be yet a more honeſt man than a good Hiſtorian. In the darkeſt receſſes of their Hearts whom he deſcribes, you may behold the clearneſs of his own; and amidſt the falſe Lights which he diſcovers in their Conduct, he always takes a true proſpect of things himſelf: he makes ſound Judgments of every thing, for his Soul is as ſteddy as his Mind is well balanc'd.

Tacitus is a man of a quite different Character: he is a great Wreſter of things to what ſenſe he pleaſes himſelf, and one that ſhrouds a malicious Heart under a very excellent Wit. He is always miſtaken upon the point of true Merit, becauſe he is not

acquainted with any but what proceeds from ſubtilty; and it is rather ſome political Reflection than the pure truth that makes him ſpeak. Beſides the ill thoughts he has of his Neighbour, whenever he has any occaſion to ſpeak of the Gods, he makes not any diſcovery of Piety or Religion, as may be ſeen in the Diſcourſes he has upon Deſtiny againſt Providence, in the ſixth of his Annals; and he imputes all things to the Stars and to Chance, upon the occaſion of *Thraſullus*, who being Aſtrologer to *Tiberius*, was become his Confident at *Capree*. So difficult a matter it is for a man who is not vertuous to make a good Hiſtorian; for the Principles of the one are not compatible with thoſe of the other.

When therefore an Author takes Pen in hand, he immediately puts on the Character of a publick perſon; and he again degrades himſelf from that Honour, as ſoon as he aſſumes the Sentiments of a private man, to mind himſelf, and to revenge his own quarrels. This was the caſe of *Procopius*, who being exaſperated againſt the Emperour *Juſtinian* and the Empreſs *Theodora*, hearkens to his paſſion, and corrupts the Truth. Or elſe he is apt to follow his own Preoccupation, as *Euſebius* and *Theodoret* did, who made uſe of their Hiſtories to eſtabliſh their own

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Errors, or to flatter thoſe whom they would pleaſe, as *Buchanan* did, who in his Hiſtory of *Scotland* took occaſion to blaſt the Reputation of Queen *Mary Stuart*, purpoſely to gratifie Queen *Elizabeth* of *England*. And as *Fra. Paolo* did, who makes his Hiſtory of the Council of *Trent* a Satyr againſt the *Roman* Church and Religion, in whoſe conduct he makes a great diſcovery of little Cheats and Frauds, only to revenge himſelf upon the Pope, who did not advance him to the Dignity of a Cardinal, after he had put him in ſome hopes of it.

Paulus Jovius was a man who did things purſuantly to his Intereſt, a Penſioner of *Charles* the Fifth, unjuſt, malicious, and a great Flatterer. The Pourtraitures he has made of the moſt conſiderable perſons of his Hiſtory, are ſo many pieces detach'd from it, which he dreſs'd up into *Lives of Illuſtrious Men*, out of the pure deſign of getting Money; and they are writ anſwerably to the Rewards he received for them. *Guicciardine* betrays the Paſſion he has againſt all *France*. *Sandoval* makes *Charles* the Fifth paſs for a moſt Catholick Prince, while in the mean time he foments Hereſie in *Germany*, onely becauſe Pope *Paul* the Third had diſguſted him. *Cabrera* celebrates *Philip* the Second of *Spain* for his Piety, though he favour'd

Queen *Elizabeth* against the Pretensions of *Mary Stuart*, whom he hindered from being Queen, because she had a kindness for the *French*, and by that means obstructed the Settlement of the Catholick Religion in *England*. *Herrera* is a superficial Writer, and partial in the Concerns of his own Nation. In short, there are hardly any Historians, who have not their Inclinations and Aversions; they think it a hard task to devest themselves of their Sentiments, and they make Elogies or Satyrs according to the dispositions of their own Hearts.

Marcellin. in ejus vita.

But there are few Authors of such a Character as *Thucydides* was of, who out of an unbyass'd sincerity commends *Pericles* in whatever he did that was commendable, though he had been ill-treated by him; and always does justice to the *Athenians*, who had banish'd him into *Thrace*, where he dy'd. He was a man without any passion, who propos'd to himself onely what judgment Posterity should make of his Work, and was resolutely bent to stick to the truth; wherein he has shewn him a better-principled man than any of the others, for his Fidelity and Probity is remarkable through all his Work.

Titus Livius is more favourable to *Pompey* than to *Cesar*, *Dion* more favourable to *Cesar* than to *Pompey*. *Ammianus Marcellinus*

is

is a perpetual Adorer of *Julian* the Apostate, and a great Declamator against *Valentinian* his Successor, because he was a Christian. *Eusebius* never shews *Constantine* but with the best side outward; *Zosimus* shews him onely with the worst. *Procopius* idoliz'd *Belizarius*; *Eginart* had the same Veneration for *Charlemaigne*, *Sandoval* for *Charles* the Fifth, *Strada* for *Alexander Farnese*. In fine, every Historian makes himself a *Hero* according to his own fancy, whom he looks on as his Creature; and to make him the more beautiful he endeavours to make him the more admirable. And this is it that raises a suspicion of most Histories, because all Historians have their passions; and there are few of them sincere, because there are few but follow the bent of some Interest. On the other side, they who are not sway'd by Interest, are apt to be blinded with the desire of pleasing, and the care they have of their Reputation, inclines them to other Extremities. *Josephus* in the History of the *Jews*, suppresses true Miracles to humour the *Pagans*, who would not have believ'd them; and supposes things lesse true, because he thought them such as were suitable to their gust and capacity. This

Josephus non tam studebat vera scribere, quam credibilia: hoc causa fuit, cur praeterierit miracula, quod apud infideles fidem non erant habitura; & narraverit fabulas, quas putavit in magni probabiles futuras. Leo Cast. disp. de transf. sacr. leg. c. 36.

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is the way to deſtroy, and not to eſtabliſh; things ought to be related as they are, ſince it is ſo much the worſe for the incredulous; for nothing more misbecomes a man, who makes it his profeſſion to give the publick an account of Truth, than thus to profane it. In ſhort, let there not any thing of Servility or Meanneſs appear in the Sentiments or Inclinations of the Hiſtorian; for nothing creates a worſe Opinion of his Fidelity. But though I do not approve the Flatterers of great men, ſuch as *Euſebius* was, who will not have us ſee any thing but what is commendable in *Conſtantine*, who in the mean time had great defects; yet is it my judgment, that they ought to be indulg'd in certain things. For though a man ought to ſay nothing but what is true, yet all truths are not to be ſpoken. *Quintus Curtius* might have forborn the Infamies he ſpoke of *Alexander*; there are ſome Heads ſo privileg'd that they require reſpect; let us therefore treat them honourably, and not be chargeable with any inſolence towards them. We may relate the Vices of their perſons, but let us not ſay any thing that may ſcandalize their Dignity, or abate ought that is due to their Grandeur. *Tacitus* ſays ſo many dirty things of *Tiberius*, that *Boccalini* cannot endure him for it. What *Lampridius* relates of the

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Emperours *Heliogabalus* and *Caracalla*, has made his Hiſtory deſpicable; and *Platina* diſcovers but little judgment in his way of treating the Popes. All will not be of my Opinion, but the wiſe will; and it is my perſuaſion, that how meritorious ſoever it may be for a man to be ſincere, he would be ridiculous if he were ſo in all things. But it is to be conſider'd withall, that praiſes are never well made, becauſe they are not made with the delicacy that is requiſite; that Commendations are made upon indifferent paſſages, and not upon thoſe of which men were more likely to be ſenſible and mov'd thereat; that the publick is always in an ill humour againſt Commendations, which it hardly ever applauds. The ſecureſt way of Commendation is, onely to make a ſincere recital of commendable Actions. All know the Adventure of *Ariſtobulus* one of *Alexander*'s Commanders, who read to him the Hiſtory of the Battel which that Prince had gain'd over *Porus*. *Alexander*, who was ſailing on the River *Hydaſpes*, highly diſguſted at the Flatteries of that Hiſtorian, ſnatch'd the Hiſtory from him and flung it into the River, adding that he ſhould be ſerv'd ſo too, for being ſo impudent as to commend ſo ill, attributing to him imaginary Exploits, as if there had not been real ones enough. This is a rough draught

Lucian. de conſcrib. hiſt.

of the Morality which I ſhould wiſh in an Hiſtorian; or at leaſt theſe ſhould be my Principles, if I had any deſign to concern my ſelf in the compoſing of a Hiſtory, and thought my ſelf of a *Genius* vigorous enough for it. In ſhort, I would be modeſt after ſuch a manner, as that there ſhould always be an appearance of Candour and Moderation, never any vanity in my Sentiments. Upon which conſideration I can hardly bear with the Extravagance of that Hiſtorian mentioned by *Photius*, who preparing himſelf to write the Hiſtory of *Alexander* promiſes, *that his ſtyle ſhall not be inferiour to the tranſcendent actions of his Hero.* But after all, a man's edge to writing is ſoon taken off, when he has ſeen the judgment which *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus* paſſeth upon *Thucydides*, if he be any way ſtock'd with a ſenceful Apprehenſion of things: for there is no Author, though ever ſo judicious, but may dread the Cenſures of that Critick. And theſe are the Sentiments which I have gather'd by the reading of Hiſtorians. I am not ſo vain as to pretend, that I lay them down for Maxims; they are onely Conceptions, poſſibly not well digeſted, which may become good by the good uſe which may be made of them. In the next place you have the Sentiments which may be had upon the moſt conſiderable Hiſtorians.

XXVIII.

A Judgment of Historians.

HErodotus is the first that gave a rational Form to History, and it is his Elogy that he chalk'd out the way to others. His Style * is pure and elegant. † *Athenæus* celebrates him for the Charms of his Discourse. His subject is of a vast extent, for it comprehends Nations, Kingdoms, Empires, the Affairs of *Europe* and *Asia*. He is not very exact in what he says, because he grasps at too much matter; but I find him of a more than ordinary sincerity, inasmuch as he treats the *Greeks* and the *Barbarians*, those of his own Country and Foreiners, without any discovery of Partiality. I find also that *Plutarch* treats him with too much rigour, when he would have him accounted a person of an evil intention in most of his Conjectures; but that he is not favourable to him proceeds from pure Animosity, and merely because he had ill treated his Country *Beotia* in his History.

* *Dulcis, candidus, fusus Herodotus.* Fab. l. 10. c. 1.

† Lib. 3.

In Herodoto.

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Laudatur ab omnibus ut verum explicator ſincerus & gravis — Hujus nemo neque verborum neque ſententiarum gravitatem imitatur. Cic. de opt. orat.

Thucydides is exact in his manner of writing, faithful in the things he relates, ſincere, unſway'd by Intereſt. He has Grandeur, Excellency, and Majeſty in his Style. He is always auſtere, but of an auſterity which has nothing but what is great; and his ſubject is indeed not ſo large, and more limited than that of *Herodotus*. 'Tis merely out of a ſpirit of Partiality, that *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* prefers *Herodotus* before *Thucydides*, becauſe the former was of *Halicarnaſſus*: but for my part, I find him the moſt accompliſh'd of all the *Greek* Hiſtorians.

Xenophon is pure in his Language, natural and pleaſant in his Compoſition. He has a freedom and facility of Spirit, a Mind fertile and full of many learned Diſcoveries; his Imagination is clear, and his Periods are of a juſt Intertexture. The *decorum* of Morality is not always exactly obſerv'd in his Hiſtory, wherein he makes ignorant perſons and Barbarians ſpeak like Philoſophers. *Cicero* tells us, that *Scipio* could not give over reading him, when he had once got him into his hands. *Longinus* gives him a Character of Spirit, by which he makes him a fortunate Reflecter on things. He is, all conſider'd, a very accompliſh'd Hiſtorian; and 'twas by

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the reading of his Hiſtory that *Scipio* and *Lucullus* became ſuch great Chieftains.

Polybius is an excellent Diſcourſer; he has a fair ſtock of good and noble things, but that ſtock is not ſo well husbanded as that of the others before mentioned. He is however eſteemable by the *Idea* which *Brutus* had of him, who in the greateſt perplexity of his Affairs paſs'd away whole nights in the reading and ſtudy of him. His deſign was not ſo much to write a Hiſtory, as an Inſtruction for the good Government of a State, as he declares himſelf at the end of his firſt Book: and ſo he recedes ſomewhat from the Character of an Hiſtorian; which obliges him at the beginning of the ninth Book to make a kind of Apology for his way of writing Hiſtory. His Style is chargeable with ſomewhat of negligence.

Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus in his Book of *Roman* Antiquities, diſcovers a great Senſefulneſs of Expreſſion, much Science and Ratiocination, which is not common. He is exact, diligent, judicious, of greater Veracity than *Livy*, and very ponderous.

Diodorus Siculus is a great Character, but one that comprehends too much matter, being con-

consider'd as a Compilator out of *Philistus*, *Timæus*, *Calisthenes*, *Theopompus*, and others.

Philo and *Josephus* have some Touches of a very extraordinary Eloquence. They are two *Jews*, who were over-desirous to please and humour the *Pagans*, by servilely accommodating themselves to their gust and sentiments.

Arrian is but a Copyer of *Xenophon*, and an affected Imitator of his ways. He has made seven Books of the Conquests of *Alexander*, as *Xenophon* had done of the Conquests of *Cyrus*.

Appian sponges upon all the *Greeks*; and out of that intermixture he has fram'd to himself a Style which does not resemble any of the others. *Scaliger* calls him, *The thievish Drone of other Historians.* He has taken out of *Plutarch* what was excellent in him; but after all, he is a great Magazine or Stock of Matters.

Alienorum laborum fucus. Animad. ad Euseb.

Dion Cassius has lost credit with many, by the extraordinary things which he relates, without any discerning Precaution; for he is so far from keeping close to the truth, that he is at a distance from the likelyhood of it, as

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in that passage of the sixty sixth Book of his History, where he affirms, that *Vespasian* healed a blind man by spitting upon his eyes.

Procopius is exact in what he advances, because he accompanied *Belizarius* in his Wars, and was a Witness of his noble Actions; but he is somewhat too dry in his History of *Persia*, which has the Air rather of a Journal than of a History. He satisfied his passion in the writing of his Secret History, but he hearkned to his Moderation in suppressing it; for after his death some took occasion to publish what he had carefully conceal'd during his life, wherein he is not wholly inexcusable.

Most of those who have written the *Byzantine* History, have either copied one out of another, as *Agathias*, *Cedrenus*, *Joannes Cinnamus*, *Nicetas Choniates*, or are not very exact; and they have nothing that approaches the Dignity, the Excellency, the Discernment, and the Fidelity of the ancient *Greeks*.

Amongst the *Latines Salust* is conspicuous for the Grandeur of his Air, the Steddiness

Subtilissimus brevitatis artifex Sallustius, proprietatum in verbis sequentissimus. Gellius.

of

of his Thoughts, and his admirable Sence. No man has better express'd the senceful, accurate, and austere Style of *Thucydides*. He is sometimes harsh in his Expressions, but yet he is not faint or flat. His Conciseness takes off somewhat of his Perspicuity. He has nothing that is counterfeit in his Procedure, and he gives weight to whatever he says. His Sentiments are always excellent, though his Morality was not good; for he perpetually rails against Vice, and always speaks well of Vertue. I find him ever dissatisfied with his Countrey, and one that is apt to think ill of his Neighbour: All else consider'd he is a very great person.

Salustius homo nequam, sed gravissimus alienæ luxuriæ objurgator. Lact. de falsa relig. l. 2.

Julius Cæsar had the noblest talent of expressing himself of any man. The Pedants have reason to admire him, for the inimitable purity of his Style; but I admire him much more for the exact comprehensiveness of his Sence, for no man ever writ more prudently. He is the onely Author amongst them all who does not speak any Impertinencies. He speaks of himself but as of an indifferent person, and there is nothing but what is suitable to the wise he has taken upon himself. 'Tis true, he is not absolutely an Historian; but it is true withall, that he is a great Model for the writing of History.

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'Tis a great repute to that admirable Author, that *Henry* IV. and *Lewis* XIV of *France*, implove themselves in the Translation of his History of the *Gallick* War.

Livy is the most accomplish'd of all, for he has all the great parts and perfections of an Historian; the Imagination excellent, the Expression noble, the sence exact, the Eloquence admirable. His Mind will not admit of any but great *Idea's*, he fills the Imagination of his Reader by what he says: 'tis by that he makes his way to the Heart, and moves the very Soul. And he is the greatest *Genius* for History, and one of the greatest Masters of Eloquence that ever was. I do not comprehend what *Asinius Pollio* means, when he attributes to him a Provincial Air, and such as hath a little smack of *Lombardy*. His great talent lies in making what he says to be felt, by making those who read him to participate of his own Sentiments, by inspiring them with his Fears and Hopes, and by communicating to them all his Passions, by the Art he has to put all the most secret resorts of mens hearts into motion.

In Tito Livio putat inesse Pollio quandam Patavinitatem. Fab. l. 8. c. 1.

Tacitus describes things after a way different from all others, but he confines himself too much to great Affairs, that he may avoid

condescending to small ones, which yet ought not to be neglected. He thinks well, but he is not always happy in expressing himself clearly. He plays too much the Philosopher. His Decisions of things are high and daring; had he the Destinies of men in his hands, he would not speak otherwise; and he always moralizes on the Extravagances of others, sparing none, and speaking ill of all Mankind. How many Minds has he spoil'd by the fancy of studying Politicks, which he inspires into so many people, and which is the vainest Study of all? 'Tis upon this rock that so many *Spaniards*, as *Antonio Perez*; and so many *Italians*, as *Machiavel* and *Ammirato* have split themselves. 'Tis onely by the Lustre of his Style that this last so much pleases the higher sort of Wits, and so little those that affect what is Natural; for by the subtilty of his Ratiocinations and Reflections he tires them. He is so obscure in his Expressions, that a man must be well exercised in his Style, ere he shall be able to unravel his thoughts. His way of Criticizing is delicate of it self, but it becomes Rustical by the desire he has to criticize upon every thing. His perpetual assuming of great Sentiments must

Evenit nonnunquam ut aliquid grande inveniat, qui semper quaerit quod nimium est. Fab. l. 2. c. 13.

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introduce ſomewhat that is ſublime; 'tis by this onely that he impoſes, and 'tis not ſo much to pleaſe and to inſtruct that he writes, as to raiſe Admiration. There is in him ſomewhat that is great and extraordinary, which excuſes moſt of his Defects. But there are ſo many things to be ſaid upon this Author, as well to his advantage as diſadvantage, that there would be no end of them. 'Tis a kind of humour that is of no uſe but onely for Oſtentation; and it contributes but little to the ordinary Converſation of men.

Quintus Curtius is commendable for his ſincerity; he tells the good and ill of *Alexander*, without ſuffering himſelf to be preoccupated by the Merit of his *Hero*. If there be any exception to be made againſt his Hiſtory, 'tis onely that of its being too polite; but yet he has excell'd in this particular, that he deſcribes mens manners with a delightful and natural Air.

This Character of Perfection, which is remarkable in theſe great men, was not to be found in the ſubſequent Ages. *Juſtin*, who becomes a Compiler, out of a deſire to raiſe himſelf to an Hiſtorian, gives but a tranſient account of matters. He knows much; he delivers things ſenſefully enough, and he

has amass'd many Occurrences, which without him might have been lost.

Most of the Authors of the History of *Augustus* have confin'd themselves to the writing of Lives, as *Plutarch* and *Herodian* did amongst the *Greeks*, and *Suetonius* and *Cornelius Nepos* amongst the *Latins*, and by that means have degenerated from the Character of Historians. Who came after them were but simple Chroniclers, Copiers, Abbreviators, and Compilers, who had no Reputation but what they deriv'd from the gross knowledge they gave of their Ages, wherein the Star of History was not fortunate, as having nothing that's delicate or indeed rational.

Nor was there much Sincerity found amongst the modern *Greeks*, who must needs introduce Visions and extraordinary Adventures to satisfie their *Genius*. The love of Learning, which has reflourish'd in the last Ages, hath raised up, together with the revival of sencerful writing, a flight of Historians, who by the Study of the Ancients, whom they took for their Models, made a greater noise than their Predecessors.

Amongst

Amongst those, who have most signalized themselves may come in *Comines*, and what is singular in him is, that he writes sencefully and is sincere. *Paulus Æmilius* speaks purely, but he is superficial. *Paulus Jovius* follows onely his own Passion and his Interest.

Machiavel is exact enough in his History of *Florence*; in the rest his Wit has the predominancy over his Judgment. He does not absolutely do justice to *Castruccio Castrucci*, whom he treats as an Enemy to his Countrey.

Mariana in his History of *Spain* has not been surpass'd by any modern Author, either as to the Grandeur of his Design, or the Excellency of the Style.

Buchanan is too servile an Imitator of *Livy*; whatere is good in him he has filch'd from the Ancients. He writes sencefully, but has no great Elevation in his Sentiments. His long Citations of the third Book do not generally please, no more than do the Particularities he brings in, in the second Book of the notion of the Country whereof he speaks.

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The *Germans* have vaſt Projects upon their Hiſtory; but nothing reduc'd within the natural order, which an exact Deſign would require.

We find in moſt of the *Spaniards* a Spirit of Partiality for their Countrey, which renders them very ſuſpicious.

The *Italians* are well furniſh'd with particular Hiſtories of the different States whereof *Italy* conſiſts; but they have no compleat Body of Hiſtory. There begin now to appear amongſt us ſome rays of hope, that ſome accompliſh'd Hiſtorian will riſe up, by the Approbation which the Publick gives thoſe who write at this time.

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FINIS.